

Cassidy Drives Pre-Teens Wild

By MEGAN ROSENFELD

WASHINGTON (PT5) — "Are the car doors locked?" the manager asked. They were.

"OK, let's go," and they left for the theater.

Minutes later, the big black limousine with David slouching in the back arrived at the Merriweather Post Pavilion in Columbia, Md. and there — spilling onto the entrance road, overflowing the guard rails and metal barricades, was the David Cassidy Fan - Atic Club — hundreds of shmy brownies, eager girl scouts, hudding Miss America contestants — all awaiting for their first glimpse.

They were reaching out to stop the car, straining to see inside, waving, taking pictures, screaming, crying, pressing against the windows.

"It's David, it's David," they squealed. "He's here!"

Meanwhile, David the superstar, totally cool and utterly together in blue jeans, waved nonchalantly then worked his shoulders even lower into the push upholstery.

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A year ago David Cassidy was a 20-year-old teenage star with guest appearances on "Marcus Welby" and "Bonanza."

Today David, his baby-blue eyes, and his throbbing delivery are part of the folklore. He has the lead role in "The Partridge Family" series.

The Partridges are a jolly, singing ensemble — a sort of rock-and-rolling Southern California, Trapp family.

His concerts have both sell-outs, sometimes within a day and a half after the tickets go on sale. "I Think I Love You," the first single from the television show, sold over five million copies, topping charts in England, Australia and Japan as well as in the U. S. A.

The other records have sold more than a million each and are still going strong. Three concerts one weekend produced a gross of about \$115,000.

David Fan - Atics are more in the permanent press league than the funky denim-bottomed illitas you find at Rolling Stones or James Taylor concerts. They're braless, some of them, but that's because they're only six years old. They get hysterical, but you can be sure they don't rip their clothes off or smoke grass.

The Pavilion management, as in other theaters where David plays, hired extra matrons for the ladies' rooms to take care of the girls who faint, and an extra contingent of guards — all nice fatherly men who won't beat up the kids when they try to rush the stage. These fans, perhaps because they're younger, are polite in their own frenzied way; they usually turn back when so directed.

Before he appears, the tension finally culminates in ritualistic chanting. "We want David, we want David."

When David finally streaks onstage in a blazing white ensemble, trailing fringe in his wake, all hell breaks loose. Popping flashbulbs, screams, banners waving, girls rushing down the aisles, jumping up and down, clapping, stamping, throwing things — it's a three ring explosion that sends replays of



DAVID CASSIDY

... utterly together

those scenes in "A Hard Day's Night" flashing through your mind.

All the songs sound the same and they all sell millions of copies. David introduces each number with a sort of mumbled commentary. No one knows what he's saying and he doesn't seem to know what he's saying, but it fills up the spaces and gives him a chance to catch his breath.

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He strides across the stage when he's singing, giving each side of the house equal time. His style is gawky - young. It reminds you of your brother doing imitations in front of the mirror.

After 12 high-powered numbers and a few plugs for the latest album (they even scream at the commercials) he tears off the stage and into a getaway car that whisks him away before the mob can get him. The limo remains as a decoy, and when it leaves, carrying the manager and whoever else is willing to risk his life, the crowds are ready and waiting to push up and get their last glimpse of Mr. Perfect. They're disappointed.