

there. I tell you it's scary and it's frightening but I love those girls.

"I really do, and I think it's because I understand them. Many of them have reached that age, 14 or 15, where I've become their first love. They identify with me. I know it's all vicarious. But they don't. They fantasize a lot. They dream of me. They talk to me. They think of me. I'm part of their dream world. All kids have dream worlds. Boys want to grow up to be great athletes. Girls want to grow up and take good guys for good husbands.

"You ask me how I feel about the millions of little girls who would gladly tear me to pieces for a souvenir? I love them, because they're good and wholesome, and they regard me as safe and trustworthy. I can feel the spirit across the footlights. Those people out there, those kids who come to hear me sing—they love me. And I try to return their love. And maybe it sounds hokey and corny, but I feel it's genuine. Maybe when I get older and more sophisticated, I'll turn cynical. But right now I'm not. I'm a realist. I've been in show business for years.

"As you know I come from a show business family. I know about ups and downs. This is one of my up-periods. I think I'm taking it in stride despite all the pressures."

Pressures increase

What are the pressures which confront a young man who virtually overnight becomes a top teenage idol by appearing on a weekly TV series, recording two albums, and cutting two hit singles, "I Think I Love You" and "Doesn't Somebody Want To Be Wanted?"

First, comes the danger of taking himself too seriously, of going on an ego trip, of mistaking luck for talent, of succumbing to the swelled head.

To date, the virus of conceit has not infected young Cassidy. He remains likable, considerate, polite, seems to maintain an inner self-composure beneath an exterior of shyness.

Presley's pattern

"I think," he says, "I'm pretty level-headed. I expect success to change me but not to spoil me. I never dreamed this sort of thing would happen to me. Two years ago I was just another young actor trying to get a break, trying to improve his skill. Then I caught on. How long will this popularity last? I don't know.

"I expect that I may repeat the Presley pattern, not exactly like Elvis, but something similar. I'm going to peak, then I'm going to go down and level off. And then hopefully, I can regenerate myself and have people look at me not so much as an idol. Like I don't think they look at Elvis now as an idol. He's sort of built-in like he's a good performer, a good singer. And I think I'm as equally equipped as he is to withstand the pressures of this business.

"I still want to act, you know. That's how I started in playing dramatic parts on a lot of TV shows, *Marcus Welby*, *Mod Squad*, *The FBI*—but I know I'll never stop singing. Whether I end up selling records is another thing, but I know I'll still make out, still make singles, still make records. My voice has grown and matured over the last two years. It's a lot better now than it was. You know, I'm pleased with it. I think I sing fairly well."

David Cassidy was born into a show business family in New York City on April 12, 1950, and nurtured on celebrity and personal turbulence which often accompanies it. His parents, actor Jack Cassidy and actress-singer Evelyn Ward, were divorced when he was 5. His mother subsequently married and



David's father Jack Cassidy offered advice: "Don't be sorry you were in a flop; you'll never learn as much from a hit."



David's TV family: Shirley Jones, David's stepmother in real life, plays the mother of five children in "Partridge Family."

divorced a second husband, director Elliot Silverstein. His father married actress Shirley Jones who plays his mother in *The Partridge Family*.

Like many children of Hollywood, Cassidy encountered school trouble. "I couldn't make the grade at a lot of public schools," he admits, "Emerson Junior High, Hamilton High, Uni High, but I finally did well at Rexford, a private school in Beverly Hills. I graduated and then took a semester at Los Angeles City College. But I left. I just didn't want to become anything at the time. Luckily I had a high draft number, 346, so there wasn't much danger of my being drafted."

In Broadway flop

After dropping out of Los Angeles City College, David worked with the Los Angeles Theatre Group, appeared in summer stock and won a costarring role in his first Broadway musical, *The Fig Leaves Are Falling*. It bombed in less than a week which prompted his father to tell him, "Don't be too sorry you were in a flop; you'll never learn as much from a hit."

David never traded on his family name. When he tried out for *The Partridge Family*, the producers weren't

aware of his show business parentage. They didn't even ask him to sing. They bought his looks, best described by his press agent Jim Flood as "representing a positive sexual quality, a youthful, clean-cut appeal which is neither physically nor emotionally threatening to young girls."

The "Cassidy Look" is frankly androgynous. It combines the appeal of an innocent boy with the prettiness of a young girl. David's TV stand-in significantly enough is a 23-year-old girl named Jan Freeman.

At age 22 it is unlikely that David will outgrow his "Look" for some time. What then lies in store for him; a lengthy career as a teenybopper idol?

The show biz experts estimate that the success span of a contemporary teen heartthrob ranges from two to three years unless his image is reinforced by periodic motion picture exposure.

Without feature films, David Cassidy's time on top is limited, which is probably why he's making it while he can—not only in his concert appearances but in bubble gum, TV residuals, and of course, in David Cassidy love kits which consist of photos and the story of David's life—price, one dollar.



Excited New York girls drown out all music as David Cassidy performs, but no one seems to care. Audiences such as this make him today's hottest performer.