

New Image, Old David



DAVID CASSIDY AT HOME

'I'm not trying to create a new David Cassidy, I'm just letting the old one do what he wanted to,' the superstar of the Partridge Family reveals in an at-home rap.

By Barbara Lewis

LOS ANGELES.

David Cassidy sat curled up in an easy chair in the living room of his simple ranch house in "The Valley," as that section of this sprawling city is known here. He was wearing cutoff jeans and apologized for his appearance.

"I've been painting," he said as I stared around at the walls to observe his works of art.

"No," he apologized again, "I've been painting the woodwork and trying to get the house in shape."

And that's how David Cassidy, idol to millions of squealing young stars around the world, spends his time when he's not working. And he's been not working a lot lately, a state of affairs self-imposed.

David resents allegation of a changing image, but that apparently was an underlying factor behind his rest. There are no fans more fickle than those who devote their distant adoration to stars like Cassidy. An idol lesser than David would have been self-satisfied. But the youthful-looking performer, taking a backward glance at his career, says there were many wrong moves made in what was meant to be in his behalf. Now he's aiming at an altered course.

With a little prodding he reflects that he would not be a David Cassidy fan, if in fact he were not David Cassidy. Very deftly he swivels past questions that would clarify his statement.

"Let's just say that I was given material to do that I would not have selected for myself." And then with the polish of someone accustomed to giving appropriate answers he adds, "I am of course grateful to all those who helped me and worked with me over the years. I feel, however, that I must now select other material and I am doing some of my own writing. I have a new producer Rick

Jarrard and a new single, 'Daydream,' from the John Sebastian catalogue."

David also blames his would-be dislike of David on articles that have been printed about him; particularly in fan magazines.

"They were always writing things about me that were not true. They wanted interviews and when I didn't do them they would write about me anyway," he said ruefully. "At any rate, I would not like the person that they were writing about."

It's not terribly surprising that David is press-shy, and he readily admits that he has not done any interviews for longer than he can remember for certain.

He's also rather inaccessible. For example, let me reconstruct the procedure I went through before David pressed the buzzer which swung open the electronically-controlled gates that protect him from the fans that would camp on his doorstep if they could get that close.

I had done an interview in London with Beatle Paul McCartney in which he explained why he was so anxious to keep on working although he could retire on his earnings and his laurels.

"I don't want to be someone who was... McCartney said. "David Cassidy is new. People here are screaming for David Cassidy. They don't pass him on the street and say, 'you know who he used to be.'" McCartney also went on to say in reference to Cassidy, "Kids are only interested in what's new—not what was. Adults are interested in what was. I don't want to stay away from the public and say that I was a Beatle. David Cassidy says, 'I AM DAVID CASSIDY.' And right now, he has it all over me."

I thought that was pretty impressive. Paul McCartney who has singles and albums, past and present, on all types of music charts, says that Cassidy has it all

over him. I thought Cassidy and his fickle fans would like to know about it as well.

I returned from London and called Cassidy's record company in New York. Bell Records was delighted to hear what McCartney thought of Cassidy, but he doesn't do interviews, they said. Try calling his manager, Ruth Aarons, they suggested.

Not only did I call Ruth Aarons, I flew to California and called. She was never in and never returned the calls. Her secretary was also impressed with McCartney's endorsement, but reiterated that Cassidy does not do interviews.

I called the public relations office of ABC Television, the network on which The Partridge Family appears. No problem, they said, they would call Ruth Aarons. Again no response from Ms. Aarons. I tried reaching David through producer Wes Farrell and later learned that David no longer considers Farrell his producer.

In the course of my travels I mentioned the problems in reaching David and well-meaning associates said they had contacts with those who had contacts. Nothing.

As luck will have it, I was having dinner one evening at the Bistro, a chic, expensive Beverly Hills restaurant frequented by Hollywood's elite. Bob Elliott of Screen Gems, which produces The Partridge Family, was there and I repeated to him the efforts I had exerted to reach Cassidy.

"Do you want to meet him, he's here," Elliott said, departing without waiting for an answer. He returned moments later with Cassidy, who was elegantly dressed in a brown velvet suit with a ruffled shirt.

"I've been wanting to meet you," David said, extending his hand. "I heard about the McCartney interview and I'd love to know more."

He repeated his dislike of interviews but suggested nonetheless that I come to his home. He had hired a new publicist (Bob Levinson) and said he would have him make the arrangements.

So, there we were sitting in his living room, talking about McCartney for whom he has the greatest admiration. At one time, he said, it had been suggested to him that McCartney might do some things for him.

He was hesitant to impose, he said and furthermore, while he was enormously flattered by McCartney's accolades, he thought it would be most presumptuous to capitalize on them.

This is his last year with The Partridge Family. His contract calls for him to do 24 more segments and he is fulfilling his obligation. With an assertion of loyalty and pragmatism, David explains that The

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POPS CALENDAR

AUG. 26 GRAND FUNK RAILROAD, Copernicus Memorial Coliseum, 8 p.m. \$6. Tickets on sale in San Antonio through San Antonio Ticket Service. Telephone 626-6351.

AUG. 30-31 NAVASOTA, Midnight Cowboy, HemisFair Plaza, 8:30 p.m. \$2. Tickets at Mr. Natural 1 and 2, Flip Side, Green Earth and Truckers.

SEPT. 6 ANDRAE CROUCH AND THE DISCIPLES, Trinity University Laurie Auditorium, 8 p.m. \$2.50. Tickets on sale at Book Book Nook, the Scripture Stall, One Way Bookstore & Word of Life Bookstore.

SEPT. 28 FACES WITH ROD STEWART, Convention Center Arena, 8 p.m. \$6, \$5, \$4. Mail order only at this time by sending money order and self-addressed, stamped envelope plus 25 cents handling charge to San Antonio Ticket Service, P.O. Box 6588, San Antonio, 78209. Stole how many tickets desired.

For information in this calendar, call 222-7111, ext. 302.