

The Cassidy charisma

By WALT TROTT
staff writer

DAVID CASSIDY is pleased that he has been asked to serve as youth chairman of the National Special Olympics and the singer says he plans to be active in his new role.

The idol of America's bubblegum brigade has already sent letters out to high schools across the U.S.A., asking students to volunteer as athletic coaches for mentally retarded children.

Cassidy says he will also use his personal appearances to recruit people to work with handicapped youth. He added that teens can help the less-fortunate youths do such things as jump rope, toss a ball and learn to run.

The boyish-looking 23-year-old entertainer is presently on the last lap of a three-week European tour that ends March 24. However, the popular TV star of "The Partridge Family" series was forced to cancel twin concerts in Frankfurt due to an unusually slow box office.

Apparently the Cassidy charisma doesn't appeal to older music fans or young GIs, although his German sponsors report that his Hamburg show was a sellout. In England, he has been booked for an unprecedented six concerts at London's Empire Pool, and business was good for his four shows in Manchester.

Cassidy's managers say his poor showing in Frankfurt, and an unenthusiastic reception in Luxembourg, were because audiences there are just not familiar with the star. They pointed out that his U.S. TV show has not been aired in

those areas, although it is now shown in the Hamburg area.

Nonetheless, David Cassidy is a big, big star in North America and England, ranking right along with The Osmonds and The Jackson Five in popularity among teenyboppers. His most recent single and LP, "Rock Me Baby" and "Notebook" receive wide airplay.

Born in New York City, David's show business parents are actor Jack Cassidy and Evelyn Ward, a stage and TV actress. The senior Cassidy starred in the Broadway musical "Superman," and more recently in the film "Bunny O'Hare."

His father's second wife, Oscar-winning star Shirley Jones, plays David's TV mom on "The Partridge Family." Jack and

Shirley have three sons, Shaun, Patrick and Ryan.

"I was originally an actor," David explained. "But I've been singing a lot now and I really dig it. However, there's no reason why I can't be both actor and singer."

Though Chet Atkins has little need for worry, Cassidy has learned to play the guitar to accompany himself on stage.

The 130-pound, 5-foot 8-inch actor has delicate features, hazel eyes and shoulder-length brown hair. He easily passes for the teen-ager he portrays on video.

Following high school graduation, David studied a year with the Los Angeles Theater Group and later moved back to New York where he enrolled in the David Craig

School of Musical Comedy.

"That led to the Allan Sherman musical 'The Fig Leaves Are Falling' on Broadway," he noted.

A role in the ill-fated TV series "The Survivors" with Lana Turner brought Cassidy back to the West Coast. Guest star roles in "Bonanza," "Ironside," "Adam-12," "Medical Center" and "Mod Squad" have helped establish Cassidy as something more than a teen idol.

"Being a teen idol gets to be a bit trying every now and then, but it's nice too," he grinned.

Although the singer's face regularly adorns the teen fan magazines, he says he seldom grants interviews with those



Young Cassidy, here belting out his hit "Rock Me Baby," was disappointed in his Frankfurt and Luxembourg showings.



modern living

publications and, "I never read that stuff."

He makes his home in Laurel Canyon near Los Angeles and says that writing and water skiing are his main off-camera interests.

Romantic interests? "Not presently," he replied. "Where would I get the time to devote to a serious relationship? But there'll come a time . . . I'm patient," he said.



Shirley Jones, David's stepmother, portrays his TV mom.



Jack Cassidy, David's dad, is a popular actor in his own right.