

Cassidy Cash Keeps Coming

NEW YORK — David Cassidy's screaming success is as intricate as a military maneuver and even more delicately manipulated.

Every swing of his lassoing microphone lead jerks swoons from his teeny bopper fans and ropes very solid millions from their hip-hugging blue jean pockets.

Each minute of a Cassidy concert is a commercial ballet choreographed to the tune of jangling cash registers.

His fans may be too old to adore their daddies and too young to go on dates but they are ideally aged for their first spending sprees.

Faces flushed and their teary eyes still red from a live encounter with their idol, Cassidy's little-girl audiences open their hearts and handbags willingly to the operators of Cassidy's organization.

Clutching their David Cassidy school bag, smothered in David Cassidy "lux" stickers, they eagerly buy the David Cassidy posters, David Cassidy photo albums and David Cassidy love kits that are offered.

Chewing pink sticks of Partridge Family bubble gum, they reach blindly for even more money in their David Cassidy blouse pockets to buy David Cassidy shirts and David Cassidy dresses.

Even the teeniest of the ween-boppers are not overlooked as they goggle knee-high at their hero, their tightly clenched fists locked onto their David Cassidy coloring books.

It is all cash, hard chunky cash spun off from the shrewd marketing and skillful promotion web that enmeshes the star.

No teenage idol has ever had the same slick packaging so deftly tapping the spending power of a pre-teen audience.

Allowance

David Cassidy draws a small weekly allowance of \$250 from his business manager, Lee Buch, but his yearly earnings are well into the six-figure bracket.

Screen Gems, the television subsidiary of Columbia Pictures, which owns "The Partridge Family," earns more than \$100,000 from its hubblegum royalties alone, and makes a very cool fortune from a line of Partridge Family fashions.

Cassidy keeps one full-time clothes designer working in Hollywood coordinating his show clothes (always white in keeping with the "youthful purity" of his image).

As a result of his popularity, million dollar deals are made over coffee, and hundreds of show business and investment people struggle to get close to him.

The David Cassidy-related employment stretches coast-to-coast from the fan magazine publishers and the New York record promoters to Hollywood.

The competition for a piece of the Cassidy action has reached cutthroat proportions.

According to Ruth Aarons, the president of Aarons Management Inc., which represents Cassidy, she was offered \$125,000 "front" money, a huge under-the-table bonus and a promise of hidden interests in future deals, if she would sign him with a certain new talent agency.

"Months before his old contract was due to expire people started coming out of the woodwork," she said.

"It was as if a virus had struck the show business market," she laughed, "the germs were everywhere."

Cassidy's most difficult promotion problems have passed. He has settled into a simple mold that avails of fence and enough cotton-candy sweetness to satisfy the kids.

Singing

His singing may not be inspired, but neither is it too bland. It has a similar sound to that of David and Cliff Richard.

"I know I sound about 12 on my first album," David admitted.

"I just couldn't listen to it now, it sounds so bad. But I've been singing a lot since that and I really feel I'm singing pretty well now — I've grown a lot."

David doesn't compare his style to those of other performers, and insists he has never tried to consciously copy any other singer.

"I can only say that I don't really want to be classed with anyone."

"I really know what I want to do with my act. I can record anything and sing anything I want."

"Before, they used to hold the reins on me," David said. "They didn't know where I was going to go. They just didn't want me to go crazy and blow the whole thing wide."

But Cassidy, like Donny Osmond, Bobby Sherman, Barry Williams and a handful of other idols of the bubble-gum set, have long since made it.

His fawn-like face with its demure dimples gazes from fan magazines like Flip, 16, Teenbeat and Specs surrounded by bold banner lines such as "You Know our Love for David Cassidy is Deep and True," or "Why No Girl Can Make Him Happy," and "Would You Like to Know When I was Born, How Old I Am, My Coloring — and All My Measurements?"

Apparently so says Chuck Laufer, a former high school English teacher who now rides the Cassidy wave with a fleet of newspapers and a score of his own Cassidy products.

He publishes the fan magazine Tiger Beat (monthly circulation 400,000), Fave (285,000) and the Partridge Family (200,000). He also owns the Partridge Family Fan Club — with 200,000 members at \$2 each a year.

Before his sell-out concert at New York's Madison Square Garden, David made a 24-hour visit to finalize arrangements.

Flight

He flew in directly from Europe where he had been touring Italy, France and Switzerland in a camper bus, and put himself to work immediately.

In the one day he met record company executives, talked with representatives of the music-industry magazines, sat down for a few brief interviews and went over plans for his opening with stadium officials.

It was simply another contribution to the David Cassidy industry, a small boost to keep the records, posters, pictures, magazines and answers to fan mail steadily pouring out. . .

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