



Pictures: GEOFF AMPT

Superstar Cassidy: "I feel hemmed in."

The faces pressed to the window outside David Cassidy's Press conference yesterday ran tears and smudged the plate glass.

Sandra Armenio, 15, pressed both hands into her dark wavy hair and said, wet cheeked: "I've idolised him for four years."

Inside the room, David Cassidy was feeling the other end of the rope-tight tension. Reporters, photographers and television girls pressed in on him like a rugby football scrum a hundred strong.

"How do I feel?" he answered a radio man's penetrating question. "I feel . . . hemmed in." Cassidy cast a look round the front row breathing in to his face from a foot away.

The more delicate eased back six inches.

Cassidy entered the interview room at the Southern Cross Hotel, beside the courtyard where the teenyboppers were, on silver cowboy boots, and wearing blue jeans and an unassuming big-check shirt.

A Southern Cross house detective drew blue curtains across the plateglass, saying: "The hotel manager ordered it."

Cassidy talked about the exploitation of the young and his urge to grow.

"The people who used to manage me put my face on lunch boxes, pendants, tee shirts," he said.

"I was exploited, totally exploited. I had signed the rights to them, they made all the money."

But the real sufferers were his millions of juvenile followers. "I feel it was ripping the people off," he said.

Lamenting that everybody in pop music today was copying everybody else, Cassidy turned the clock back to his own days standing outside the plate-glass window.

"At 14 the Beatles would come on my record player . . . It was like electricity. Today that feeling is gone, there no individuality in pop."

Cassidy said he intended to go and greet the young fans after the conference — only to find himself whisked away by a phalanx of bodyguards who grunted: "The kids have gone, anyway."

Not gone—shifted. They were milling at the interview room exit as Cassidy came out, thrusting autograph books, stroking his duck-tail locks, shrilling their adoration.

The bodyguards scrummed a path through and hustled away the "superstar of the 70s" (as he is billed).

Cassidy sings tomorrow afternoon at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.