

# David Cassidy tries to shed teenybop image

By James Johnson

LONDON.

David Cassidy, for so long a number one pin-up, is now only a teen hero with reluctance. The American singer, who was once even described as the most screamed at singer since Elvis Presley, is trying to shrug off his teenybop image and in London recently has been explaining why with some gravity.

"For the first time you can talk to the real David Cassidy," he informs rather grandly. "Before I was just a manufactured image. People used to think I was the naive boy next door with nothing to offer with my music. I'm out to prove them wrong."

To back up all the hyperbole, a new album has just been released which indeed reveals a more adult approach for Cassidy even if it will never be hailed as any kind of rock epic.

But try as he might on this visit he has, as usual been hounded by a clutch of female admirers. It means little of his personal life seems to have changed.

As he talked at the offices of RCA Records this week, a body-guard sat in the corner with the kind of impassive expression peculiar to men of his calling.

And a few yards away a film crew hovered waiting for their pre-arranged ten minutes with the star.

"You mustn't get too close," they were told by a record executive before Cassidy's arrival.

## Sensitive

"David is very sensitive to close-ups. If you get within ten feet he'll kick you out."

Cassidy himself has, however, always been one of the more interesting and erratic of teenage phenomena. Over the last two years he has announced he was going to retire several times over. Also he has appeared more human and fallible than the usual clean-limbed prototype. He was never the right man for the part from the beginning.

There was once, for example, a memorable article in the American Rolling Stone



CASSIDY: Screams.

magazine which blew the gaff on his dealings with girls and mild stimulants.

According to Cassidy: "Most of it was true. I had a girl with me that night when they came around. I liked her so I slept with her."

Also he appears to enjoy his large following among the gay fraternity. Lately he has been pin-up of the month in Gay News and made the front page of another magazine Gay Encounter.

Says David: "I think it's hilarious."

## Fed up

It does therefore not seem too out of character for Cassidy to announce that he is fed up with being the staple diet of teen dreams. He says he never wanted it in the first place and for that reason became disorientated by his success.

"When I was a young unknown actor on the Partridge Family I signed my name away. There was little I could do about it.

"I was turned into something I wasn't.

"Eventually I was like an emotional yo-yo. I was high one day and into incredible lows the next.

## No time

"My girl-friend left me because I couldn't give her enough time but I didn't have enough time for myself. I couldn't cope with making records, the business hassles, success and trying to keep a relationship going.

"It was then that I decided to drop out of it all. I became a vegetable for a while. I had two collapses and became a recluse.

"Now for the first time I don't feel like I'm acting at what I'm doing."

As yet though it has had little impact on his fans. Cassidy may be weary of girls screaming at him but there is little he can do to avoid it.

He shrugs and says: "If that's their trip, I don't really mind," before adding hopefully:

"They're growing up all the time."