

## Youth View

# Former Idol of Teenyboppers Plans Comeback

BY COLIN DANGAARD

Three years ago David Cassidy was the teenybopper's superpuppy, a slender, flaxen-haired boy who sent blood rushing through young veins, his records selling over 20 million copies.

Then he dropped out of sight, as if down a well.

"If I hadn't stopped what I was doing," he explains now, "I would have gone crazy. I felt like a piece of meat. Nobody was thinking about me as a person; their only concern was what I could do for them.

"I was being manipulated, and it was very frustrating. I was starting to read my own press releases ... life was getting shaky.

"So I looked around, saw that I had made a lot of money — so much that I do not have to work again — and well, I just dropped out."

He took a thoughtful sip of his cocktail over lunch at the Los Angeles Press Club, then said: "But now I want to work again. Sitting back and watching the grass grow is fine for a while — but then it gets dull.

"I feel good about myself. I feel I want to go out there, maybe hit the road again. I am 26 years old. I've grown up. I'm not the kid I used to be.

"I'm not interested in money, or gigantic audiences; I'm interested in

quality. I want to blow them out of their boots."

The new self-assured David Cassidy has no fears about finding an audience again, explaining, "If you're a good artist, and you have the talent, you'll be all right. Frank Sinatra went through a period where he couldn't get a job, couldn't sing. Ava Gardner went through something similar. And back in 1944 they were saying John Wayne was over the hill.

"I want to do something really genuine now. I was always uncomfortable with the way people reacted to me before. I arrived in some countries greeted like a Messiah. I wanted to yell, 'Hey, wait a minute! All I want to do is sing.

"There were times when I felt like James Bond, with tens of thousands of people screaming for me.

"And the girls! They drove me crazy, always clawing at my body. On the road there was always this one room, where we'd corral a hand-picked dozen of the most beautiful.

"After the show, I'd go to this room, pick the one I wanted, and let the band divvy up the rest. I was an animal!

"Pretty soon, I became terribly lonely, and stopped participating in this kind of thing. I was tired of strangers in my room, my bed; tired of girls climbing up the fire escape and hiding in my closets, in my shower.

"Once I fell back in bed, very early one morning, after flying all night, and found the hotel's day manager between my sheets. I jumped up and began screaming and pounding the walls.

"Once, just once, I became seriously involved. But I was working 18 hours a day and I just couldn't get it off. I didn't have the time this lady wanted.

"Because I was unable to pursue girls in the normal manner, and because I had so little time, I became an emotional retard.

"One part of my life was growing all the time, along with my bank account, while the other remained stunted.

"Now ... all that has changed. I find myself responding to people on a one-to-one basis. I'm normal — and I like it!"

Still, there were moments David will never forget, instances that left him quivering with excitement.

"The energy flow was incredible. I was getting high getting people high. Often I wished others could stand in my shoes to feel the intensity."

When Cassidy dropped out, he went to Hawaii, where he has a home, and "let the tension ooze out". He looked up old friends. He bought some horses. He read books and wrote quiet, soothing songs.

"I found myself marvelling at how I

had been doing three jobs, working 16 hours a day, seven days a week: as the star of a television show, recording as David Cassidy, and going out on weekends to do concerts.

"I cannot describe how wonderful it was to be in a situation where I could stay out three nights in a row, if I wanted: where I did not have to be at a certain place at a certain time."

During his three years of "drop-out time" Cassidy rekindled a childhood love of horses. He now has a stable of 17, some of them racing or about to race.

"When you consider that you can pay \$100,000 for a stud fee in this business," he says, "you've got to be serious about it."

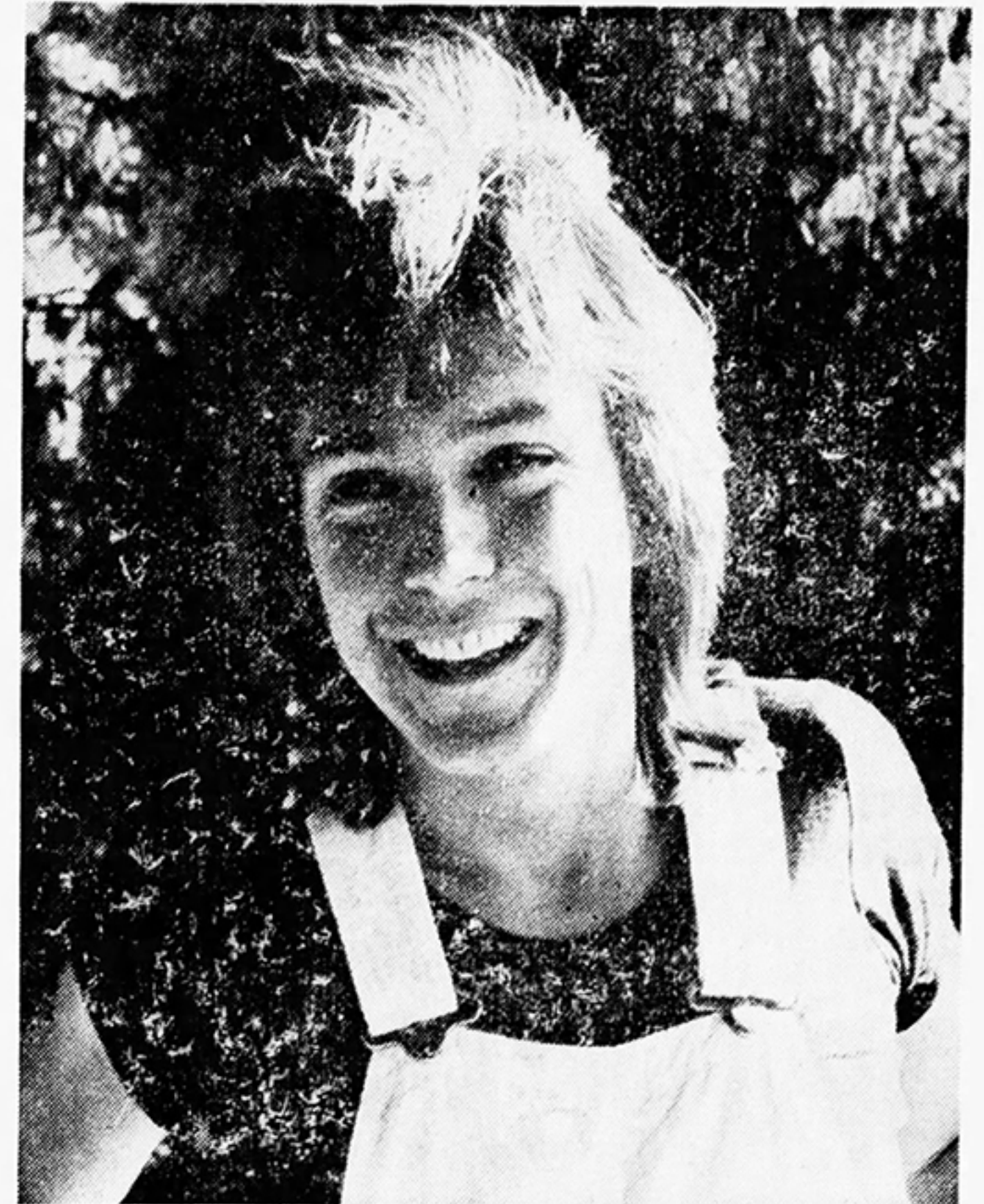
Despite some heavy business losses — \$350,000 in cash with one rip-off oil scheme — he still is financially secure.

"I don't have to work again, if I don't want to," he says. "But I do! I want to move. I want to make music people will want to hear."

Thus, Cassidy has just cut a new album, called "Gettin' It in the Street." He is also looking at roles for another television series.

"Like it or not," he says, "I'm coming back."

Colin Dangaard is a Malibu, Calif., freelance writer who contributes articles to the Journal.



Singer David Cassidy

"I Was Starting to Read My Own Press Releases"