

A Cassidy returns to first love—acting

HOLLYWOOD — Well, just look who's back — back in the kind of fine dramatic role he used to play before a lightweight, immensely popular television series turned him into a singing, guitar-strumming, teen-age idol.

David Cassidy, no less!

If you'll think carefully, you may remember that David, son of versatile actor Jack Cassidy, half-brother of new teen-age idol Shaun Cassidy, was a serious actor capably handling subtle, dramatic roles before he was cast as Keith Partridge in "The Partridge Family."

When that happened, most of the junior high school girls in the world declared him their hearts' desire, and, since they didn't care whether he could act or not, pretty soon nobody else did either. Except David.

David cared.

He cared so deeply that by the time "The Partridge Family" had gone to roost (and his disenchantment with the series hastened its demise), he was so sick of being a teen-age idol that he ran away from Hollywood and hid.

As early as the summer before "The Partridge Family" aired for its final season, David confided to the press that as soon as he'd completed his commitment to the show, he was going to escape to a place he had in Hawaii and let the rest of the world go by.

Since then, though, David has grown up, fallen in love, married and re-evaluated his situation, with the result that he's come back to the Hollywood area and will be seen in NBC's "Police Story" sometime this season, playing a narcotics officer.

"What brought me back to the Los Angeles area is a fresh attitude," David said recently, shortly after he'd finished his "narc" role.

"My feeling about working has changed a lot.

"When we finished the series, my energies were all depleted. I was emotionally and physically exhausted and needed to find out who I was. So I went to Hawaii and to a place I had in Santa Barbara to recover."

David's not knocking the fact that the Keith Partridge role made him rich and famous, nor does he deny that he gained valuable experience playing it.

"But," he said, "I wanted to be taken seriously, so I went through a lot of inner turmoil.

"I thought about writing a book, too," he said, "but at that time, putting it all on paper would have been too painful. My experience had been so devastating.

"Some of it had been so shocking. Still I'm glad it happened."

One of the most important factors in setting David straight has been his love for and marriage to Kay Lenz, his bride of seven months.