

His rock days a bad dream, Cassidy says

FOR DAVID Cassidy, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" is something of a holiday gift. He was in the show on Broadway from March through August and found it something of a theatrical dream assignment — infinitely better than his gyrating, singing days as a teen-age idol.

Now he has managed to sandwich in a few weeks of "Joseph" in Houston, Toronto and Pittsburgh before going back to a new TV pilot project in California.

In a phone interview from Toronto he said: "Every night I went on stage in 'Joseph' I had a great time. The story is about people having a good time and is very uplifting. It's certainly better than spilling your gut in some gut-wrenching play which is not fun to do. 'Joseph' is for people of all ages, and those who see it can put all the problems of the day behind them.

"'Joseph' has been around since 1968 and has lived on its merit. The show is only 90 minutes long but there is a lot of energy wrapped up in that short space of time. 'Joseph' brings light to people's lives."

After the Broadway run of "Joseph," he was asked to tour but declined because he is involved in a TV pilot which he will both produce and star in. So he could only manage to do "Joseph" in three cities.

"Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" deals with the story of the biblical Joseph, the last of the 12 sons of Jacob. His jealous brothers sell him into slavery in Egypt with only a colored coat for Joseph the Dreamer, but Joseph goes on to great success in the Pharaoh's court.

The show will run Dec. 19-23 at 8 p.m. at Heinz Hall.

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David Cassidy puts rock days behind him

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Cassidy, 33, is not far along in developing his TV project, which he says will involve comedy, drama and music. "I'm not interested in the location. I'm interested in how the people in the show relate to each other. In 'Hart to Hart,' Stefanie Powers and Robert Wagner relate to each other so the show can be in outer space or under water. People turn it on to watch the characters. It's a mistake to be overly concerned with the situation in the show. Audiences turn on TV to watch the people."

Cassidy, a friendly, soft-spoken young man, still cringes when he thinks of his early career when he was the rage of teeny-boppers.

"My fan club members were in the millions, and the situation got so overwhelming I spent most of the time perpetuating David Cassidy the performer, not David Cassidy the human being. I worked at it 18 hours a day, seven days a week. At times it got really hairy on tour.

"At the end of one tour I had 15 people for security, getting me in and out of stadiums. We didn't use the decoy limousines the way some stars do. They transported me in a Brink's truck. It was madness. I can't tell you the times things got out of control. In England in 1975 they had to use dogs and water hoses to chase off the crowd.

"I was living like Elvis (Presley). I had friends who were buffers between me and the fans, and fortunately they were real friends, not hired hands. But I was like a man living on an island all to myself. That was no life. That was existing. I had to get away from that madness and get in touch with other human beings and being a human being."

He quit the touring business cold in 1975 after a concert of 40,000 screaming fans in England. He took off for nearly 3½ years "to re-evaluate myself and see what I wanted to do. I didn't know who the hell I was. I needed time to be a human being."

During the 3½-year hiatus, he spent time traveling, in the United

States and in Europe, and did limited recording, but was not involved in promoting the records. He thinks he was able to survive his former bizarre way of life because "I left at my peak. It didn't leave me."

In his first professional work after the long layoff he got an Emmy nomination for Best Actor in "A Chance To Live." After that show he went into a TV series, "Man Undercover," based on "A Chance To Live." He admits the series was a mistake.

Cassidy was born in New York City on April 12, 1950, the son of the late actor Jack Cassidy and actress-singer Evelyn Ward. His parents were divorced when he was 5. His mother remarried and Cassidy married actress Shirley Jones, who played David Cassidy's mother in TV's long-running "The Partridge Family."

In his touring career as a singer he did about 300 concerts, broke numerous attendance records, sold more than 20 million records and accumulated 18 gold records. He started in "The Partridge Family" at 19 and stayed with it four years. All those show business activities helped him become a multimillionaire at an early age.

When his late father, Jack Cassidy, was in Pittsburgh for a Civic Light Opera show, "High Button Shoes," in 1972, he admitted being estranged from David. He said: "He (David) is 22, has his own house and is a millionaire. How do you counsel a kid like that? We share the same manager and I get my licks in that way."

David is looking forward to seeing his stepmother in Pittsburgh where she will be appearing in a pops program with the Pittsburgh Symphony. "I have talked to her on the phone and she is very anxious to appear in her home town."

Cassidy was recently divorced from actress Kay Lenz and is now engaged to Meryl Tanz, 37, of South Africa, who is a thoroughbred horse breeder and racer in Kentucky. Cassidy is also an avid thoroughbred horse breeder.

— Carl Apone