

David Cassidy

Without Partridges

TORONTO

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David Cassidy, who was a teenage idol as the star of *The Partridge Family*, the ABC series that was on television for four years until 1974, is cooking a new series. Cassidy has not been on television since *The Partridge Family* vanished, but now, he and one of *The Partridge Family* producers and another cohort in Los Angeles are collaborating on the new endeavor which is loosely described as a comedy with music. They are angling for a network spot next fall, but even the identity of the network is vague.

The producers plan to film a pilot, possibly a TV movie, to air in the spring, but at the moment, plans are nebulous. "It all depends on which network we go with," Cassidy says. "I want to go where we'll get the most support.

"I feel like doing a series. The time's right and I want to go back to TV. I want to make music, but where I go depends on which way the wind blows. It does feel good."

Cassidy rocketed to prominence in *The Partridge Family*, a half-hour sitcom about a fatherless family of six who decide to form a rock-and-roll band. Shirley Jones was Shirley Partridge and Cassidy was Keith. The series pilot clicked, especially with the teenagers, blossomed into a series, and Cassidy was unprepared for the spontaneous and overwhelming response. His albums and merchandised souvenirs sold like 50-cent dollar bills, and the success and the adulation and the money swamped him. After the series folded, he undertook a concert tour, but quit in 1975 after an eight-month swing that encompassed Europe and the U.S.

"It was getting to be too much," he says. "There was so much security and the logistics of touring were exhausting. I met John Lennon once and he told me those were the reasons The Beatles stopped touring. I had done it the best I could. At that time, I didn't know what I wanted from life, but I knew what I didn't want. I didn't want to work seven days a week, 16 hours a day.

"The David Cassidy on the lunch boxes, bubblegum cards and T-shirts wasn't me. The machine was well greased, the hype loud, and the publicity efficient, but people didn't see who I was."

As the son of the late Jack Cassidy and actress Evelyn Ward and the stepson of his *Partridge Family* costar, Shirley Jones, Cassidy had dreams of being a serious actor and musician. Instead, he became a superstar rock musician and TV idol. He has tried to shake the *Partridge Family* image and even did a nude layout for *Rolling Stone* to blur it, but many of his old fans refuse to let go.

"I still have five international fan clubs," he says. "When I was on Broadway doing *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, many came from all over the world and stayed in New York for weeks on end, coming to every performance.

"*The Partridge Family* has its own life. It's still in repeats. Some of the kids who were fans when it was running are married and have kids of their own."



David Cassidy

Recently, he was in Toronto with a touring company doing *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. At 33, he is regrouping. He is back in live theatre and did a tour with *Little Johnny Jones*, but refused to take it to Broadway. In his judgment, it was a turkey — and he was proven right. Donny Osmond took over for the Broadway stand and the show closed in one night.

Now, he is renewing his career, or maybe he is starting all over. "You take a lot for granted when you play crowds of ten to fifteen thousand a night," he says. "I remember I was playing Madison Square Gardens in front of twenty-two thousand fans and I could feel the rumble and roar of them backstage. My mother, grandfather and family were out there. You can't imagine the energy you feel."

In retrospect he says: "I was manipulated very well. I eventually had to leave. There were too many people with their hooks into me. But I can't feel bitter. I went for it. I made that decision. Now — I'm in control."