

David Cassidy glad to be an ex-teen-idol

"It was awful," David Cassidy recalls. "It was horrible. You'd be sitting in a nice restaurant and some girl would come in and start crying."

Along with the short-nosed sturgeon, composers of light opera, Batman and Robin, and hoola-hoop manufacturers, the teen-bopper idol has become an endangered species.

He's lost his clout. Magazines such as *Tiger Beat Star* ("Isn't Matt Dillon de-vine!!!!") and *Sixteen* ("Well, what about Duran-Duran? Huh, well????") have lost the grip they once had over all those dusty little n-nus out there.

TV is more interested in the mid-life crises of the bopper's parents. And the the closest we've come to the real thing recently — Rick Springfield — is all of 34 years old.

Yuck-oh! Like, Grecian Formula time.

Perfectly neat

David Cassidy thinks this is perfectly neat — sorry, acceptable. Maybe 12 years ago, when he was making \$250,000 a year with *The Partridge Family*, he said things were "neat." Not any more.

According to his publicists, back then, he thought love was "neat." Equally neat were blue, fuchsia and most other colors. Girls with great personalities were neat, too. (Girls with great looks always came in second after girls with great personalities in *Sixteen* magazine, which had its own version of the way things worked.)

That's not his view of life these days. A "couple of nervous breakdowns later" Cassidy is beyond the screaming. He opens tomorrow night in Tim Rice's Biblical pop musical *Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at the O'Keefe Centre. He wants to be considered a serious actor. He's 33. He wants plenty of time for his hobby, raising thoroughbred horses.

"I used to see myself on the back of cereal boxes and on bubble-gum cards," he said recently. "Everywhere I looked there I was. There were David Cassidy magazines and David Cassidy dresses. No wonder people didn't look at me as someone who was real.

"I left the business for 3½ years. I had to. I'd become locked into it all. I worked in the TV studio all day, in the recording studio all night and we'd tour on the week-



ends. It owned me. I was very successful. But I was lost."

Karen Hazzard, a prominent local talent agent, says the market for the teen-bopper idol is gone. "Television is looking for men in their mid- to late-20s," she said. "There are no vehicles for the teen idol any more."

But it's not just tight pants we're going to be missing here. Some history has gone too.

"Bobby-soxers stop Times Square," was the headline. This

was in 1944 when Frank Sinatra the Paramount Theater for the mould from which all others were cut. After Frankie came the deluge:

□ "Paul! Ringo! John! George!" (1964).

□ "5,000 eeks! Ooohs! For the Bay City Rollers." "It was hectic," says a Metro policeman. (1976).

□ "It's teen power! 20,000 flock to dream Shaun." "I sent him (David's younger brother Shaun) 50 letters but I didn't get one response," says teary-eyed fan. (1977).

Okay, this is not serious history. I'll admit this amounts to a kind of silliness taken to the extreme. But at least it's openly silly. The ongoing foofahrah over the Stratford Festival, on the other hand, is the worse kind of silliness, the high-minded kind.



Serious actor: David Cassidy (shown here, left, with Tom Corder in the New York production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*) Says being a teen-idol was "awful."