

David Cassidy stars in the Broadway Nights production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" at the Opera House.

# David Cassidy in living color

## Former teen idol stars in "Joseph"

By Tom Carter  
Herald-Leader staff writer

When *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* closed in New York last fall and plans were made for it to tour, actor-singer David Cassidy had to be talked into doing any of the road dates.

Except the one in Lexington.

"That's because I knew it (Friday) was the opening day of the Keeneland spring meet," said the 33-year-old Cassidy, who will have the lead in *Joseph* when it opens Thursday at the Opera House.

*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* is a retelling of the biblical story of Joseph, the favored son of Jacob. The story is told entirely through song, with a score that ranges from country to rock to calypso. Originally written in 1967 as a musical piece for a schoolboys' choir in London, the work has been performed on Broadway.

Cassidy performed in the show in New York last year, stepping into the role after Andy Gibb.

Cassidy's interest in Keeneland relates to his investment in the horse industry, a business he began more than a decade ago in Lexington.

"I have a very special feeling for Lexington," Cassidy said. "I wanted to do *Joseph* there for the people who wanted to see me in it but couldn't get to New York."

Cassidy also learned to enjoy life in Lexington because he could fit in here as just another horseman rather than as a celebrity.

"For many years I didn't do a whole lot of talking about my participation in the horse business," he said in a telephone interview last week from his farm home in Southern California.

"I've had a lot of show-business exposure, but the horse business provided me a balance in my life. When I would go to the sales and the farms, I tried to stay pretty much inconspicuous and low key and not make a big deal out of it," he said.

But Cassidy has become an energetic supporter of the

horse industry since he agreed to help work on the entertainment committee for the Breeder's Cup, which will be run Nov. 10 as the biggest purse event in the history of horse racing. The race at Hollywood Park will be covered by network television. The day's racing card will feature purses of \$1 million to \$4 million.

"I feel like I have a responsibility," Cassidy said. "I love this business, and the Breeder's Cup is an opportunity for us to reach people and get them interested in racing and horses. It's the equivalent of the Super Bowl of racing, and I'm very anxious to do something on this year's telecast."

Cassidy, whose 3-year-old filly, Icy Rainbows, may run at Keeneland during the meet, owns and operates his horse business in partnership with his fiancée, Meryl Tanz. They met in 1974 at a Fasig-Tipton sale in Lexington, and Cassidy said they will probably be married before the end of the year. It will be the second marriage for both.

"She was one of the top 10 horse owners in California in the 1970s," Cassidy said. "Our lives are wonderful. We're helping one another, supporting one another, and — we're winning!"

Cassidy said he is happier now than at any point in his life. "Meryl has a daughter, Caroline, so that means I'll be her stepfather," he said. "I don't have any children of my own, so we feel very much like a family already."

But there was a time when Cassidy's very rapid entry into show business came close to costing him his sanity.

"You can't imagine how mad it is, how crazy it is, to have to do things like ride in the trunk of an automobile so people can't see you," said Cassidy, whose work on the television series "The Partridge Family" in the early 1970s thrust him into international prominence as a pop singer.

Born in New York City, Cassidy was raised in the East by his mother after she divorced his actor father, Jack Cassidy. Cassidy's father died in an accidental fire at his home in 1976.

Cassidy wanted to be an actor by the time he was 3 years old, when he first saw his father perform. At age 18, Cassidy got a small job in a Broadway show but was soon taken to Los Angeles to test for roles in several pending shows. He landed one in "The Partridge Family," which also starred his stepmother, Shirley Jones. The job lasted four years.

During that period, Cassidy recorded more than a dozen albums, either with the Partridge Family or under his own name. On records, the Partridge Family was little

more than an anonymous studio band over which the voice tracks of Cassidy and Jones were added.

(Turn to **CASSIDY, D4**)

D4

## Cassidy to mix horses with music

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Along with his stepbrother, Shaun, Cassidy enjoyed the kind of fan mania that Michael Jackson has now. Once David Cassidy was smuggled to a concert in a laundry truck. Another time in New York, fans destroyed two limousines thinking he might have been hidden in one.

"You pay a tremendous price to be so successful," he said.

"Believe me. I've been there. I had security guards around me all the time. I couldn't go anywhere. People didn't relate to me as a guy who happened to sing, who actually walked and talked and came to life. It caused me a tremendous amount of pain, and I felt totally unworthy of the adulation."

Cassidy virtually dropped out of sight for three years, emerging only to make a brief stab at TV with another series, "David Cassidy: Man Undercover."

"It was the only way I could personally survive," he said. "People thought it was professional suicide, but now I'm doing just fine."

"When I made the decision to leave the record business, I had lost direction and any motivation to record," Cassidy said. "I didn't know where I fit, and didn't know why I'd go into the studio and just grind them out."

Within the next year Cassidy plans to make another album, this time with some original music. He will also continue to get deeper into the horse business and will probably be making other trips to Kentucky, particularly to arrange the breeding of his mares.

"Kentucky is the place that has the blood," he said.

Performances of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* will be at 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday and at 2 and 8 p.m. Saturday.

Tickets, ranging in price from \$17 to \$31 depending on show time and seating location, are on sale weekdays after 10 a.m. at the Lexington Center ticket office on Vine Street. Special rates are available for groups of 15 or more, with special discounts for groups of 30 or more.