



Cassidy (center) hit his peak in The Partridge Family, with stepmom Shirley Jones (right).

FORMER rock heartthrob David Cassidy has never forgotten the day his music died 10 years ago — like him, a victim of his fear that he'd literally be torn apart by the adoring fans who made him a star.

Cassidy, now on the comeback trail after "thawing out and becoming human again," abandoned his rocketing career because his power to draw 50,000 swooning teenage girls to concert halls frightened him nearly to death.

It happened after his last performance at a Madison Square Garden concert in New York City.

All at once, Cassidy — who set young hearts aflutter on TV's Partridge Family series between 1970 and 1974 — was overcome with a morbid fear of death.

He shrugs uncomfortably as he relives that dread episode: "I was used to the girls getting hysterical, but this time it was different. The entire building seemed to rumble with their emotions.

"It was the most terrifying experience of my life because the girls were completely out of control, and I began to wonder if I'd get out alive.

"I did, but my hotel was a real dive. It smelled disgusting and

# The fear of fans that made David Cassidy drop out for 10 years

Now 34, former teen idol David Cassidy's working on a comeback and a second marriage — to Meryl Tanz (right).



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looked as though it had never been cleaned. I got into a hot bath, lay back, and then it hit me.

"I was in a state of complete shock. One moment I had been performing in front of 20,000 girls who loved me — 30 minutes later I was completely alone, in a squalid bathroom, with no money, no clothes to wear except a sweaty jumpsuit. And for the very first

time in my life, I digested my situation. I thought, this is it. This is what I have been working so hard for.

"The kids who couldn't afford to get into one of my concerts were far richer than me, because at least they were having plenty of fun, and I was having no fun at all."

Cassidy wasn't even having fun

by being the object of a thousand stampeding girls, trampling each other just to get close to the superstar.

"How do you meet those girls when you're surrounded by bodyguards?" he asks. "I just didn't get near many of them. I'd usually be sitting in my hotel room alone, watching sports on television.

"I could sing in front of 50,000

girls who all loved me, yet I couldn't get a date for Saturday night.

"I became an emotional cripple. I had no friends and no chance of making any, because I had no opportunity of meeting people.

"And, on the rare occasions when I did meet people, they just thought I was a freak.

"That's why I wouldn't trade places with Michael Jackson for anything, because he's even more isolated than I was."

So Cassidy, now 34, retreated into the world of horse-breeding, raising thoroughbred racers at his Santa Barbara, Calif., ranch. And he took a wife, actress Kay Lenz. The marriage didn't last.

"I was going through so much and changing so many times, she couldn't possibly understand what was going on, and neither did I," he says. "It's only in the last couple of years that I've settled — I'm like another person."

Of the \$70 million harvested from his name and face on everything from bubble-gum cards and cereal boxes to dolls and T-shirts, Cassidy walked away with less than \$1 million for himself.

He can't predict whether he'll reach those heights again, but now that he's taken himself off the shelf to resume his musical career, he's doing it with one big difference.

"There won't be people telling me what I will and will not be doing. I will be in charge of everything," says Cassidy.

Cassidy has begun to enjoy performing again.

In the brief time of his comeback, he's had a successful run in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat on Broadway and has cut the hot-selling single, The Last Kiss.

And there's a forthcoming album for the one-time king of bubble-gum rock.

"Some of my friends have said that I'm crazy to get into it all over again for a second time," says Cassidy, who has recently married again, this time to Meryl Tanz.

"They tell me that I'm playing with fire and that the same thing could happen a second time — that I could have spent all that time, yet find myself back where I started."