

TEN years ago the biggest teeny idol of the Seventies turned his back on his multi-million pound pop career and swore he would never return.

David Cassidy's world had fallen apart. He had spent years living like a prisoner in empty hotel rooms with thousands of teenage girls waiting outside to rip his clothes off.

Today he has made a successful comeback with his new single going to No. 6 in the charts, a new album called Romance and his appearance on BBC 1's Saturday Picture Show this morning.

'I was an emotional cripple by the time I was 25,' said Cassidy, who celebrated his 35th birthday last month.

'I spent most of my time alone watching TV and had no real friends to talk to. If I went outside I would be terrified of what the girls might do to me. Sometimes I even feared for my life.

'My world had become so unreal that I had to get out.'

Cassidy was lucky because he had already made his fortune selling over 25 million records including *Could It Be Forever*, *How Can I Be Sure* and *Day-*

dreamer, as well as starring in the Partridge Family television series.

He became a recluse at his home in California and began breeding race horses. He never listened to the radio, didn't buy records and never picked up his guitar or sang.

Last December Cassidy married South African racehorse

breeder Meryl Tanz at a secret ceremony, and now treats her nine-year-old daughter Caroline as his own.

'It was Meryl who really persuaded me to go back into the business,' he said. 'One night we were dancing cheek to cheek and I was singing very softly in her ear. She told me that I had such a wonderful voice that it

was such a shame to waste it.

'I had been dating Meryl for about three years before we got married, but I have known her for about nine years.

'I don't want to have children of my own because I'm too much of a kid myself. I'm still learning to be an adult.'

Indeed, he looks like someone straight out of college. Apart from his new highlighted hairstyle he hasn't aged from the days when his face appeared on bubblegum cards and posters all over the world. He says he is still unable to grow a beard.

'I can't really believe that I am a star again. But this time I won't let it get out of control because I'm captain of my own ship.

'And it's a ship that's not going to sink.'

David Cassidy: Ten years on, he can now face the music

by HENRIETTA KNIGHT