

Cassidy returns to theater work

NEW YORK (AP) — Television's "The Partridge Family" series proved to be a very large detour on the highway of life for David Cassidy.

And the California earthquake this year provided a small but significant traffic bump.

Now he's 43 and back traveling the serious-theater road he started out on, before he became a famous singing heartthrob, then a well-known has-been, who felt like a failure for about a decade. Now he isn't sorry he was once a teen idol.

Having a name that's recognized — "The Partridge Family" ran from 1970 to '74 — helps in getting parts and bringing in audiences.

"It has afforded me the opportunity to do the work I'm doing today," Cassidy says. "People still know me from that. I think it's a great compliment they still care.

"There aren't that many roles you're right for physically and that you get cast in. There are way too many actors and not nearly as many good parts."

Now people in 23 cities will have a chance to see Cassidy play a kid who grows up in Liverpool poverty in Willy Russell's serious musical "Blood Brothers" on its national tour through May.

Cassidy and his half-brother, Shaun Cassidy, replaced the original Broadway cast's British actors as

the Johnstone twins. After 10 months, Cassidy and Petula Clark as Mrs. Johnstone left the Broadway cast and started the tour in Dallas on Sept. 6. Shaun also left Broadway, to write and produce movies for TV. The brothers are talking about working together again someday in one of Shaun's projects.

Cassidy also had his autobiography published by Warner Books this summer. "C'Mon, Get Happy ..." is meant to answer the questions he repeatedly is asked about stardom and "The Partridge Family."

"Blood Brothers," Cassidy says, is "a complete home run on a professional level. As a life experience, it's even better than that.

"I feel buoyant and optimistic that I get to play this part all through America.

People can see me today and my work today." One critic called him "a gutsy revelation."

In "Blood Brothers," the Johnstone twins were separated at birth, Mickey raised by his working-class mother, Edward adopted and raised in the upper-middle class.

"This play has that intangible thing that gets to everybody; it's about brothers, family, mother," Cassidy says. "There's a lot of layers of emotional stuff going on in this play. I think we in America understand the English have a class system. And I think we all understand how thick blood is.