this, "a bunch of unwilling adults were dragged into a theater at 8:30 at night to watch 'The Partridge Family' and we knew the show wouldn't get on the air unless it had high numbers." The pilot was "a smashing success," and the network decided to go ahead. A few months later, when the first six episodes were shown to a similar audience, they hated it. Claver was gloomy. The network was gloomy. They asked themselves, "how could they like the pilot and hate the other six shows?"

The fact that ABC scheduled "The Partridge Family" opposite the new Andy Griffith show did little to lift the cloud of gloom that hung over Claver's head. "We were all sure the show would be killed by Griffith," says Claver. "After all, he was a proven television star. My only hope was, if we were lucky we'd get enough rating points so the network would think it worth moving us to a better spot. I used to go home at night and tell my wife, 'Poor Shirley (Jones). She doesn't understand. She still thinks it's going to be all right."

And Shirley was right! "The Partridge Family" sky-rocketed above its competitors. Why? The reasons vary. Claver thinks it's the family structure. "A lot of kids would like to be in that family," he says, "it seems like fun. I'd like to be in that family if I were a kid."

Ed Justin, head of merchandising at Screen Gems for the past 16 years, credits the show's success to its emphasis on teen-age music. "You can't just say the music is responsible," argues David Cassidy, "it's the chemistry between the actors. The show's positive. We're not trying to bring anyone down."

Writer, Bernie Slade thinks it's Shirley Jones who makes it all happen. "Kids loved 'The Monkees'," he says, "but their parents hated it and the result was no more Monkees. Shirley is our adult point of view, a parent figure who appeals to adults for her beauty and her warmth and her brains." Shirley, herself, feels