

Why not indeed? After all, it's almost impossible to record songs for four years without learning something about producing records.

Of course, in David's case, it was slightly different. He had always been interested in the production side of recording. "Really, if you're interested in getting the best sound—and what singer isn't?—then you've always got to keep talking to sound engineers and producers, asking questions and trying to find out what they know so that you can be sure that you know what's going on."

David continued, "That's why it was such a great education working with Wes Farrell. Not only was he patient and helpful, but he knew so much that I reckon in three years I learned what it takes some people ten to learn."

I couldn't resist asking David exactly what goes on in the process of recording. "Well, it's really more time consuming than it is complicated."

It seemed awfully complicated to me, but with David's help, I soon caught on.

First of all, David and his session men work out a rough arrangement, and rehearse until they've got the feel of the number. Then David and the producer (say, Rick Jarrad, who produced *Dreams*) go into the recording studio along with the rhythm section, perhaps bass guitar, drums, acoustic guitar and electric keyboard. They make enough tapes to satisfy the producer and in this case, David.

When they've got the right sound, they come up with a copy tape. Then they all listen

to that separately, and decide if it's good enough to work from.

There probably won't have been any vocals recorded yet, unless David has done a guide vocal—that's just to help the musicians that are backing him up.

After David, the producer and the engineers have listened to the copy tape, everyone comes into the studio. The musicians and the arranger meet with the conductor, and they work out the right sound, often listening to the copy tape as well, to make sure that they have the timing right.

RECORDING

While they're recording, David sits up in the control booth with the engineers. As David told me: "The first time I went into the control booth, I was knocked out! There were so many switches and gauges and needles, all connected to things that I didn't have a clue about!"

"Fortunately, I soon began to pick up what bass, treble and decibels meant when I started to record. Of course, I knew about them a bit from stereo equipment. But it was all so complicated at the 'other end' of the record!"

Once he's in the control booth, however, David's job really begins. He has to monitor the sound and try to make sure that all the instruments are on key and playing together.

"This is really the most exhausting part of the whole process. I mean, we all like music, but after playing the same song through 25 times, anyone can get a bit bored!"

After this, everyone leaves

the tracks alone until they can come back fresh and ready to work again. That may mean as much as a month, or as little as a few days, depending on everyone's schedule.

Then David, if he's the producer, does double-duty—with David the singer! The last stage but one is to record the vocals.

"I don't know about most folk, but I really dig doing these sessions late at night. I don't know what it is, but the later it gets, the better my voice feels."

Once that's done, David can return to his role as producer. The next bit is called mixing. Since all the separate instruments have been recorded on their own individual tape, or track, they've got to put together to make the final sound that you hear.

So David will be putting in long hours, making sure that just the right mixture of sounds come out. And the end result is, finally, a record.

"It sounds like a lot of work, but I really did dig producing 'If I Didn't Care'. It's something I wanted to do, 'cos I had a special feel for the song."

"But, please, don't get the idea that I'll be giving everything up to become a producer! It's just another thing that I wanted to try, and I got a kick out of it."

So if you read somewhere that David is going to give everything up and become a record producer, you can have a good laugh. 'Cos if I know David, he's got too much talent and versatility to do anything exclusively. No, this is just one more chapter in the continuing story of David Cassidy... and not the last either!!

