

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF DAVID

It was during the summer of 1971 that I first heard of David Cassidy. And — I blush to admit it — I wasn't particularly interested!

I'd heard on the grapevine about this group called The Partridge Family, and I gathered they appeared on American TV in a 'suitable-for-all-the-family' time slot. "So what?" I thought to myself. There seemed to be plenty of 'Saccharin & Song' shows about already, so I reckoned that Britain could quite easily give this one a miss. That was where Fate stepped in.

Right out of the blue, I was asked if I'd like to work on a magazine covering this show and its stars. Well, I knew a bit about Shirley Jones and respected her as an actress and singer. But, at that point, I hadn't so much as heard of any of the other folk in the series!

NEWCOMER

That was soon put to rights and I was told about this 'promising newcomer' — a certain David Cassidy. If things had gone true to fairy-story style, the name should have sent shivers down my spine. I should have gone out to buy a bottle of bubbly to celebrate and offered to work without pay.

As it happened, however, I didn't believe in fairy stories at the time. So it all went rather differently. Anyway, I signed on the dotted line and took the job. That was the beginning of a new era in my life, as well as in the history of pop music.

Little did I know it but I was destined to live, eat and sleep 'David Cassidy' for the next few years. You see, I'd reckoned on him being just another ship passing in the night. And I hadn't figured on him being quite such a big ship either!

Well, pretty soon my ignorance was a thing of the past. My desk seemed to be deluged with handouts from the States, features by American journalists and LETTERS!

At first they arrived in a fairly civilised manner, and the postman would still speak to me. Then, once our address became known, they simply flooded in and I began to look around for a second-hand ark. But there was certainly no getting away from it . . . I was caught up in the middle of something really big.

Since then I've never had reason to change my mind over that. I've met David many times in person; but I reckon I've helped to keep the GPO in business with all those lengthy transatlantic calls I've put through. So, all in all, I'd say I've got to know him pretty

well over the years. And the more I've seen of him and talked to him, the better I've got to like him.

Of course, it's sometimes difficult to disentangle the memories. It's inevitable that, over a long period of time, one concert will tend to merge in with another; that conversations will become blurred round the edges. So, if I need to be absolutely precise about a date or a quotation, I often have to refer back to the files and to back notes.

ONLY CONTACT

But I never have that problem over my first meeting with David. Somehow that's indelibly imprinted on my mind, from the moment I hoisted myself (together with some half dozen sacks of fan mail) into a long-suffering taxi. And that was only the beginning . . . I'd left most of the mail for Susie to bring along later!

It was a dark, drizzly late afternoon in February, and cold enough for me to be surprised when the taxi's headlights lit up quite a sizeable crowd of girls. They were waiting in the Dorchester forecourt in the hope of seeing David.

That really brought it home to me how lucky I was; and also what a responsibility I had. 'Cos, for many of these

