(1971). Teen pop star Davy Jones from The Monkees guest appears on the show after Marcia Brady, the president of his fan club, gets him to sing at her junior prom.

Gender roles for boys and men evolved during the '70s. Male teen pop stars were portrayed in ways usually reserved for girls and women—as objects of desire, providing a space for girls and women to own and project desire rather than only reflect it. For example, SuperGroupie and super artist, Cynthia Plaster Caster, made plaster casts of musicians' penises. Hard rock teen pop band, KISS, so wished they'd been plastered that they wrote 1977's "Plaster Caster" about her (Cynthia told me she'd never cast them!).

Teen magazines such as *16*, *Right On!*, *Star*, *Teen*, *Teen Beat*, and *Tiger Beat* promoted teen pop with articles, interviews, contests, and pictorials. Centerfolds and pin-ups, however clothed or cartoonish, reframed gender roles. What had been reserved for females—sexualized poses—was opened to males: a spread that invited a reader to handle the magazine by turning it sideways in visual recline, and potentially pull out the image. Don Berrigan, *Star*'s editor and primary writer, told me, "Sometimes they'll buy the whole magazine, just for the centerfold." *Star* featured a teen pop star, David Cassidy, showering. Editorial Associate Lori Barth and legendary photographer Henry Diltz told me they were there at that shoot; they said it was good clean fun.

The teen idols of teen pop were gateway drugs. Sweet got sexy and come-ons contained a dare as individuals and popular culture dealt with admitting sexuality, confronting racism and sexism, and questioning authority. Groupies sought adventures without marriage, hip-hop handled the vinyl, punks announced an overthrow of hierarchies, and disco encouraged dancing and queer culture. Native American

was like to be on the scene and an L.A. Queen, Morgana Welch (b 1956) told me, "It was magical, like being on drugs … We just enveloped in this world, it was their world, but you were part of it." Music journalist, Ann Powers, observes, "As has happened so many times within the realm of popular music, exploitation and the feeling of freedom merge in the troubling, celebrated figure of the teenage queen."

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Teen pop, with its veneer of cheer and innocence, often hid what the musicians truly felt or experienced: sex and drugs and lots of money. Singing songs steeped in a culture's suffering and evolving, language evolves as attitudes evolve. Some teen pop artists experienced being ripped off and raped, then replaced, as happened with the bands Menudo and the Bay City Rollers. But some of the music hinted at or suggested sublime or wonderful experience, as with The Partridge Family's "I Think I Love You" (1970) in which singer David Cassidy's voice obediently follows the almost hurried pace of the song, but here and there the intonation of his true voice: passionate and ambitious, mature with need, and working hard to attain a goal.

The Partridge Family was a TV show about a garage band that aired from 1970 to 1974. Based on a real-life band, The Cowsills, the American musical sitcom was about a family of six musicians led by their widowed mom who lived and toured together. Television's ability to nurture a musician's popularity proved instrumental.

The Partridge Family's 1970 hit single, "I Think I Love You," transformed adult male crooning into teenage dreams and its fictional teen star into a bona fide teen pop idol; David Cassidy's voice sounded like a young man's, not an adult's, vocalizing the 1960s countercultural tenet of never trusting anyone over

thirty. He was twenty years old playing the role of a teen when he joined the TV show. In 1970, his long hair and happening clothes conveyed a reassurance; he was simultaneously old enough and young enough to be cool (he wore a necklace!), his voice soft enough for youth but deep enough for potential command. Gentle! Hard! Wow! David's collar-length hair and puka shell necklace signaled female signifiers, attracting female fans.

And the music was fun. When Elvis's daughter, Lisa Marie, was just a few years old in the early '70s, she loved the show and sang along to "I Think I Love You." Her mom, Priscilla, recorded her and sent the recordings to a touring Elvis. Those recordings can be heard in the opening and closing of "Raven," a song Lisa Marie released as an adult in 2005.

The naiveté of countercultural idealism (and the hope before reality sobers) is personified in David Cassidy. The son of show business professionals, actors Evelyn Ward and Jack Cassidy, David was born in 1950 New York and raised in New Jersey, sometimes by his grandparents. David's first professional performance was in a musical on Broadway, in 1969's *The Fig Leaves Are Falling*. David moved to LA and acted in several TV shows.

Jack was a Broadway matinee star, and David's stepmother, Shirley Jones, an Academy-Award-winning actor. Shirley played his mom on the hit show, and was the only other cast member besides David to sing on the Partridge albums. Shirley had longtime acting credibility and was earning a living playing the part of a widowed woman who earned a living doing something cool as she raised a family. Her story, and the show's story, is countercultural: it's a message about women's talents and competence and power beyond and including family.

Their teen pop tour bus began the imagery and the theme song for the show; its playful design a reference to the De Stijl art style of bold shapes and bright colors—Modernism's gleeful and scary freedom along with its godless subjectivity setting the stage for the idolization of the pop star.

1971's "I Woke Up in Love This Morning" from the Partridge album, *Sound Magazine*, achieved the perfect blend of teen pop romance with a subtly sophisticated implication: what happened the night before? The title of the album suggests the popularity of music magazines. Former teen idol, Paul Anka, co-wrote with Wes Farrell the song, "One Night Stand," for the album, a double entendre of a one-night music gig and a one-night sexual experience:

> A pretty face, another place I never get to know
> a one night stand, another show

He felt pressure to perform! Oh he was sad and alone! He could be rescued! The happy humming chorus keeping the heavy meaning light enough to sing along to.

Merch for *The Partridge Family* included purses, vinyl, lockets, t-shirts, towels, dolls, buses, thermoses, radios, bubblegum cards, cereal boxes, comic books, pillowcases, and clocks. A plastic guitar! A lunchbox is in the Smithsonian.

David resented not cashing in on the merch, so he toured on the weekends. His first show sold out in one day. He also resented *The Partridge Family*; David didn't want to be a teen pop idol, and he wasn't Keith. But he was contractually obligated, as well as pressured by family. And then he renegotiated his contract with the show after realizing he'd signed when he was a minor. Clever self-care! But according to his memoir, he didn't receive the money from his merch.

In 1972, *Rolling Stone* magazine featured David naked on its cover with an accompanying story titled "David Cassidy: Naked

Lunch Box" by Robin Green. The word "box" is slang for vulva, and "naked lunch" refers to a sometimes banned series of vignettes written by William Burroughs (which were published in 1959; the issue includes an interview with wife-killing William). This play with language is a hallmark of teen pop, and of '70s gender-blending.

The cover, shot by Annie Leibovitz (b 1949), showed David nude on a bed of grass, arms raised. He was twenty-two years old and tired of the career that he didn't want in the first place. He felt like a puppet to his image, and the magazine cover challenged that image. He thanked Annie for the photo.

David told *Behind the Music* that he wanted to play like Jimi Hendrix (1942–70) and not like Keith Partridge: "Inside was this raging teen-ager who wanted to say *this* is who I am," he said, making powerful vocal sounds as he played air guitar to demonstrate. But he was nominated for an Emmy and had earned millions! By age twenty-one, he earned more than any performer on the globe, and had a bigger fan club than the Beatles and Elvis! His dressing room had a couch and lots of mirrors! Trapped in pretty boy whiteness, the massive amounts of sex with adoring fans didn't seem to help. Many fans fell in love with Keith—not David—a character who wore bunny suits and cowboy outfits on the show. Like when Elvis had to sing to a dog on a TV show, the teen pop idol felt demeaned. His attire at his own concerts seemed like a circus performer, with sparkling top hat, a jacket with tails, and a cane.

"The teen girl attraction to Cassidy wasn't just about of lust; it was also about identification. Much like the girls who adored him, Cassidy was an object to fetishize, but he was never allowed to take control of his own life," writes Kate H., in "David Cassidy: A Brief and Belated Eulogy."

David was more popular than the Beatles—and there was only one of him.

During the Second World War, when swing and bobbysoxers pronounced teen-agers as culturally impactful, Americans began to wonder why young men who weren't legally old enough to vote in their country were being drafted to fight (and die) for their country. In 1971, the year after *The Partridge Family* debuted, the voting age was lowered from twenty-one to eighteen when the 26th Amendment was approved. The singular power of a singing teen idol and swinging tweens and teens showcase the political sway of a youthquake.

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When Michael Jackson was a kid in Gary, Indiana, being raised as a Jehovah's Witness by parents, Katherine and Joe, he befriended one of the mice in his kitchen. Joe killed the mouse and broke Michael's heart. At least, that's how the story goes in the 1992 miniseries, *The Jacksons: An American Dream*.

When Michael was fourteen, he sang a song about friendship in his 1972 song, "Ben." The song about friendship was written for a movie about a rat, and it was Michael's first number one single as a solo act. An outcast who loved animals, I thought a song about a friendship with a rat meant the singer was sensitive and kind, seeing beauty where others saw ugliness and were afraid. The song itself moved listeners into the cradle of its mood, its smooth chorus an adult syrup, off-putting and endurable.

Around that time, I regularly watched *The Jackson 5ive*, an animated half-hour TV show that ran from 1971 to 1973, syndicated in the 1980s. The show was based on the real-life family in a band, a band that began in the early 1960s. Michael seemed like my friend.