

HALF
PRICE

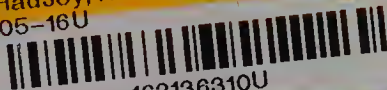
BOOKS

Our
Price

21 7/06
CLEARANCE

\$ 2-00

WeHadJoy, WeHadFun
06-05-16U



162136310U

we had joy
We had fun

*the
"lost"
recording
artists
of the
seventies*

barry Scott

The Partridge Family

Interviews with:

David Cassidy

Susan Dey

The Cowsill Family:

Bob, Paul, John, and Susan

Of all the television shows that aired during the 1970s, the one that most represents the “Lost” decade is “The Partridge Family.” Who would have believed that a program about a mother who drives a multi-colored bus with her rock ‘n’ roll singing family would become a hit and create a slew of Top 40 records and platinum albums? Many young adults of today might remember bringing a Partridge Family lunch box to school at the start of the seventies. MTV would revolutionize the way records were marketed and sold in the eighties, but “The Partridge Family” proved much earlier that TV was a powerful medium for selling millions of records (and other items).

The series was not the first to use this method, of course. Ever since the mass acceptance of TV around the same time as the birth of rock ‘n’ roll, recording artists have appeared on programs to sell their hits. Ricky Nelson started his music career on the “Ozzie and Harriet” show in 1957. He went on to have over fifty-seven charted records. Many other actors had limited chart success while in the public eye every week: Patty Duke, Richard Chamberlain, Bobby Sherman, and Shaun Cassidy each had their own TV programs while appearing on best-seller lists.

Later, in the sixties, many TV show themes themselves became hits, like “Secret Agent Man” and “Hawaii 5-0.” Then came “The

Monkees,” the series that forever changed the way television would be used to sell records. A rock ’n’ roll group as the star of a half-hour TV program was the perfect vehicle to launch a recording career that created three #1 records, three years of hits, and even a 1980s reunion. “The Monkees” paved the way for “The Partridge Family,” although most of the members of the Monkees did participate in actually recording their tunes (at least after their first album), while only two Partridges lent their musical talents in the studio. In between both entities, the Archies also hit it big, and they were just cartoons!

“The Partridge Family” premiered in September of 1970 and remained on the air through the summer of 1974. It created the first real teen idol of the decade (Bobby Sherman was a bit older): David Cassidy as Keith Partridge, and starred his real-life step-mother Shirley Jones as Shirley Partridge. Susan Dey, who later starred in “L.A. Law” and “Love and War,” played Laurie Partridge; Danny Bonaduce was Danny Partridge, the wisecracking, precocious red-head; Dave Madden was Reuben Kincaid, the family’s manager. The remaining two youngsters were relatively forgettable: Suzanne Crough as Tracy Partridge (who played the tambourine pretty effectively) and Jeremy Gelbwaks (1970–1971) and later Brian Forster as interchangeable Chris Partridges (the drummer). Most viewers didn’t even notice the cast change when it occurred.

Shirley Jones, of course, had a lengthy resume of appearances on Broadway and in major movies including *Oklahoma!* and *The Music Man*. She had appeared on Broadway in *South Pacific* and had won many awards for her vocal work. David Cassidy is the son of Jack Cassidy (whom Shirley married in 1956 when David was six) and actress Evelyn Ward. Shaun Cassidy, who had his own teen-idol career starting in 1977, is David’s half-brother. (Shirley and Shaun are the only mother and son to have had #1 records in the history of the rock era.)

On the Partridge Family records, the credit was listed as “The Partridge Family, starring Shirley Jones and David Cassidy.” Some of the best musicians and singers in the country provided the backup. No other members of the family actually did anything on the records; they were hired as actors.

To trace the beginnings of the series, we have to go back to a successful sixties singing group from Rhode Island. The Cowsills were a

family of five brothers, one sister, and their mom. Barry, Bob, Bill, Paul, and John were the brothers, Susan their little sister, and Barbara their mother. The group's first hit was "The Rain, the Park and Other Things," better known as "I Love the Flower Girl," which hit #2 in 1967. They had four other charted hits, including "Indian Lake" (#10/1968) and "Hair" (#2/1969), before mismanagement and family turmoil in the early seventies caused them to split.

The Cowsills were a singing family with a "mod" mom who drove them from concert to concert in a brightly colored bus. Paul Cowsill starts the story: "Screen Gems came to us with a script all laid out and ready to go and it was going to be called 'The Cowsills and Shirley Jones.' Now there we got into the problem. They wanted Shirley Jones to play our mother in this."

"The writers for 'The Partridge Family,'" says Bob Cowsill, "lived with us for a month or two and followed us around. It broke down in two areas. The first area it broke down was that we were getting older and you know 'The Partridge Family,' you see what they were and how they pictured us. They're very cute and everything, but by this time, John, the drummer in our band, he was closing in on six feet! The second place it broke down was Shirley Jones was to be in this from the beginning. They did not want our mom to act her part out. I know my dad didn't go for that. He wanted Mom to do it or we weren't going to do it. Ultimately, everything broke down and they moved elsewhere and decided to do a casting call approach. They did secure the services of our producer, Wes Farrell; and Tony Romeo, who wrote 'Indian Lake,' wrote 'I Think I Love You,' which was the Partridges' first hit. So they had pretty much the whole package sitting there ready to go, except we fell through it."

The resulting television show did not exactly resemble the Cowsill family, except in a limited way.

"They resembled us in the fact that they were a family involved in the music business whose mother was in the band," says Bob. "It resembled the Cowsills at a young time in our lives, when we weren't famous. It was cute and light entertainment and a way to spend a half hour without thinking about much, but they differed radically. The Cowsills' life, we had some fun, but there was also a lot of hardness to it that not many people know about."

Indeed, the Cowsill family did not have a Partridge Family kind of

existence. Their father was from a military background and ruled his family at times with an iron fist. One of the non-performing brothers, Richard, appeared on a TV tabloid show in 1993 and stated that he and his siblings were physically and mentally abused by their father. He had no real knowledge of financial issues and squandered most of the money that the family had earned by the start of the seventies. Longstanding feuds and internal arguments led to the break-up of the band and many years went by before they got back together at Barbara's funeral in 1985. Because of an interview conducted on "The Lost 45's" radio program, the group reunited in Boston in 1990 for the first time in twenty years. They are currently pursuing a new recording contract and receiving rave reviews for their live performances across the country.

Looking back, Susan Cowsill, who was in her single digits at the start of the show, has just one question:

"There's something that I've spent maybe twenty years trying to figure out. Which one [of the Partridges] was supposed to be me? Was it the little girl with the lobotomy? Tracy? Playing the tambourine?"

"I was Susan Dey!" exclaims keyboardest Paul Cowsill.

Despite these inconsistencies, the remaining members of the Cowsill family do not think the show reflected them in a bad light or hindered prospects of future chart success. Nevertheless, they have absolutely no regrets that they were not involved with the program.

Susan: "It wasn't us. It was a fine show. We used to watch it."

John: "We thought it was funny. Reuben Kincaid and that kid Danny Bonaduce were the funniest."

Bob: "I never saw our name more often in print than when that show came out."

Paul: "But we thought there were more important things going on than 'The Partridge Family.'"

Perhaps there were. But not to any pre-adolescent, half-crazed fan of the newest singing phenomenon. David Cassidy and "The Partridge Family" were everything to them at the start of the seventies.

With the Cowsills out of the picture, "The Partridge Family" TV show had its one star, Shirley Jones, and casting began for the rest of the actors. David Cassidy was already working as an actor at that

time. He had been working for the L.A. Theater Company in high school and was encouraged upon graduation to head for New York. There he studied acting while appearing in a Broadway show, *Fig Leaves Are Falling*, in 1969. His musical beginnings go back a bit earlier.

“My musical roots,” begins David Cassidy “come from being fortunate enough to be alive and be a reckless teenager in Southern California, hanging around the Strip in the sixties. I got to see a lot of bands in their beginnings. I saw Buffalo Springfield at my high school. I saw the Doors. I went to school with Jim Densmore, John Densmore’s brother [from the Doors]. I used to hang with a lot of those guys and although they were older than us, I got to feel a part of the L.A. music scene.”

As you can probably guess, David Cassidy was into music a bit harder than what came out of “The Partridge Family” years. This would later become a source of distress for him as he tried to break out of the bubblegum/teen-idol mold. The difference in his musical taste at the time is still apparent today when David talks about how he got started playing guitar:

“I got interested in playing the blues. I used to listen to John Mayall, Eric Clapton, Yardbirds, Jeff Beck. That became the thrust of my musical focus at the time. In fact, now, some twenty or so years later, I’m finally getting to explore and play some of that kind of music that I for obvious reasons during ‘The Partridge Family’ didn’t get to do. Not that some of the records that I made weren’t great or weren’t what I felt like I wanted to do at the time, but I was really walking a fine line between ‘this is what they really want me to do,’ ‘they’ being the record company, and what I wanted to do.”

David Cassidy was twenty years old when he auditioned for and won the role of Keith Partridge. Nobody connected with the show knew he was also a talented musician and singer, except maybe his step-mother. He had not actually lived with Shirley and his father; he spent most of his early years with his mother, Evelyn. He even did the pilot for the TV show without anyone’s knowledge of his musical abilities. He did not perform in the first episode, he lip synched. David himself came up with the idea that would truly launch “The Partridge Family” as a recording entity.

“I called up the producer of the show,” David remembers “and I

said, 'I got a real left field idea for you. I really am a singer and I really do play guitar.' I could hear the wheels turning, going, that's actually not a bad idea. That was it. I went over and auditioned for Wes Farrell. I sang a couple songs for him, brought my guitar. He said, 'Kid, I'm gonna make you a star!'"

As for the Cowsill family's part in the creation of the show, David doesn't have much to say about it today.

"I met one or two of them in passing. I think I met Susan a couple of years ago and she introduced herself to me. I only knew that originally the show was based on them and that they weren't involved."

"The Partridge Family" TV series started with the five younger members of the family singing in their garage, noticing that they needed another female voice. That's when they asked their mother, a widow, to join the group. Later, they recorded a homemade single, "I Think I Love You," which went on to top the charts in the country. Climbing aboard the family bus with the sign on back reading, "Caution. Nervous Mother Driving," the crew traveled from town to town promoting the record. Pretty far-fetched story line, huh?

Not really. The first single issued by Bell Records as "The Partridge Family" was "I Think I Love You." It entered the national Top 100 in October 1970, less than one month after the program's debut on ABC. Within weeks, it was the #1 song in the land and sold over four million copies—it is still one of the biggest selling records of the rock era. The catchy tune with the plaintive lyric contains a nifty harpsichord solo and is definitely one of the most loved songs from the seventies. Many a copy of the forty-five was worn out on those old Close and Play phonographs. The song also beat the Monkees' first hit, "Last Train to Clarksville," which took two months to reach #1 after their series premiered in 1966.

The musicians who played on "The Partridge Family" tunes were some of the best in the business, including Hal Blaine on drums; Larry Knechtal (who played on Simon and Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Water") on keyboards; Larry Carlton on guitar; even Jim Gordon (who later wrote "Layla" with Eric Clapton as a member of Derek and the Dominoes) played on some tunes.

"I got to work with phenomenal musicians," David says proudly. "I feel real lucky that I was able to do it. Now, of course, the guys that

I'm working with have only *heard* about Larry Knechtal and the idea of working with Larry Carlton in the studio every night is kind of a dream."

"The Partridge Family" TV series, with "The Brady Bunch," which aired before it at eight on Friday nights, was a hit especially with the younger set. Their debut album, *The Partridge Family Album*, went gold and stayed on the charts for a full year. By the end of 1971, the "family" had four more Top 40 hits, including two million-sellers. "Doesn't Somebody Want to Be Wanted," "I'll Meet You Halfway," "I Woke Up in Love This Morning," and "It's One of Those Nights" led them into 1972.

The family's second and third albums, both released in 1971, were *Up to Date* and *Sound Magazine*. Both went past gold, with *Sound Magazine* reaching #1 on the album charts. By year's end, their famous Christmas album had enough advance orders from record stores across the country to go gold *before* its release. During December 1971, everyone was playing the Partridge version of "Jingle Bells" around their Christmas tree. Things were really cookin' for the group.

Susan Dey has a reputation for avoiding discussion of her "Partridge" days. This is not based on fact.

"I don't do interviews anymore," Susan states, "because they never print the truth. They just *don't* print the truth. No, I don't mind talking about that era. I remember the first day I heard 'I Think I Love You' on the air and it makes me laugh!"

Susan even spoofed the "Partridge Family"/"Brady Bunch" hour on an episode of "Saturday Night Live" in 1991. She played Laurie Partridge once again, challenging members of the Brady family to a hilarious "battle of the bands." (The Partridges, of course, would have won hands down. The Bradys released three albums, but never could sing a note. Try listening to their gruesome version of "American Pie" some time.)

Susan had just come from New York, where she had been doing some modeling, when she got the part of Laurie Partridge. She was only seventeen and knew no one in Los Angeles. Although she was just a youngster, she felt very self sufficient, not like a child at all.

"At the time, I thought I was *the* adult. I was seventeen, but I felt like, my God, I was self-employed, I was living in L.A. It's like look-

ing at a freshman in college and they're really still babies and yet they think of themselves as adults. So I was a baby, but I never thought of it that way."

The one sore point for Susan Dey is that she wished she could have sung or participated in some way on the Partridge Family recordings.

"I really wanted to. They just said no. First of all, they had it self-contained. It's a business and David was the singer. I wanted to do it because to me, singing is just an extension of what I did. So no, we didn't sing. David sang and Shirley sang. We never really had to say that we sang. You know what it is? It's that in those days, that was still the era of all those teen magazines. They alluded to the singing group. They're the ones that printed all that bullshit about, you know, 'Susan gets home from recording,' and so forth. I don't know what company, if Screen Gems that did 'The Partridge Family' owned any of them, but that whole illusion was supported by these magazines. We were never told that we had to say this. That I sang or that Danny played the drums or whatever."

David and Susan became very close on the set since Susan did not know anyone else in town and they were about the same age.

"We used to hang a lot together," David recalls. "She would want me to sing and pick my guitar and play her something real funky and off-the-wall. Something that she hadn't heard that would put a smile on her face. I started writing these comedy songs like 'Eat My Shorts.' Things that I never ended up recording. They'll probably go on the 'Basement Tape' album. Because [Susan] had just come from New York, she didn't have a lot of friends. I befriended her and she and I became very close, because of our age and our obvious attraction for one another as people. I talk to her now and I think every time we talk, we always take a breath and go, 'Man, can you believe we did that?' She still says to me, 'I've been on "L.A. Law" for years and I've done all this stuff again on television and people only really want to talk to me about "The Partridge Family"!' I say that was the impact that we had at the time. It's funny how you look back—how silly we all were."

When asked if he dislikes the Partridge Family songs today, David responds:

"I don't dislike Partridge Family songs. It would be really okay with me if that was a band and I listened to those records and said,

‘Yeah.’ Unfortunately for me, that wasn’t my taste at the time. I think they’re good and I learned a lot from the writers I got to work with. But I saw Jimi Hendrix five times. I had every note and lick still in my head. Those were the kinds of acts that I would go and see. The Who. I guess more of a progressive approach. For me, singing what people coined ‘bubblegum’ teenage stuff was a hard pill to swallow, because it really wasn’t the kind of image or music that I wanted to play. But yeah, I think the Partridge Family made some really great records. Obviously, I think ‘I Think I Love You’ was a great record and a great song in its time.”

When most people who were familiar with the program listen to the music of the Partridge Family, they picture David and Shirley singing, of course, but also Laurie playing the keyboards, Tracy the tambourine, Danny the guitar, and Chris the drums. David sets the record straight again:

“For me, when I went in and recorded the songs and played them, those individuals were not there. I got a tape of *The Partridge Family’s Greatest Hits* when it was re-released [in 1990]. I listen to it and I reflect upon the time that I was in the studio making those records and the times that I went out and played them on the road, the reaction they got. For me, the whole collection of songs creates the imagery of a specific time and place in my life that I know I’ll never walk again. It’s now a wonderful memory.”

All of us have a moment or two in our past that we look back upon with regret. With an actor or musician, sometimes those moments are, unfortunately, seen or heard by millions of people. David Cassidy has one such recording moment and it involves one of the Partridge Family’s biggest hits.

“Probably the thing that they had to twist my arm the hardest to do,” David says, “was ‘Doesn’t Somebody Want to Be Wanted.’ If you listen to the vocal, which is one of the worst vocal performances in the history of recording, in my opinion—it was with such restraint *and* they had me do that little talking bit in the middle, which is *the* most embarrassing moment in my entire career. I have never done that song since it was a hit live and will never do it again. That one was a real difficult pill for me to swallow, because I really didn’t like the song. What they did in the early days, which really used to drive me crazy, was they thought my voice was too husky and too power-

ful. They wanted me to sound younger. So what they would do is to slow the track down and I would sing it and then they would bring it back to normal speed, so that I would sound even younger. They did that on that particular record and I really hated it.”

This same complaint has also been voiced by David’s half-brother Shaun Cassidy. His hits were also speeded up to make his voice sound more like a teenager. As for “Doesn’t Somebody Want to Be Wanted,” it sold over a million copies and was played endlessly on the air, much to David’s disgust.

“In my opinion,” David explains, “it sold so many records because ‘I Think I Love You’ had sold like four and a half million and was the record of the year and one of the largest selling singles in America of all time. When you have a record *that* big, your next single if it’s even decent is going to sell a million. My argument was that it on its own is not going to take this band or me to another level. Let’s introduce something a little different. There was no focus on tomorrow or the future. It was like, ‘Let’s cash in now.’ That was the record company’s approach and in fact they never had a gold album until the Partridge Family’s first album. The first album sold like three million eight hundred thousand copies. They were totally unprepared for it. I was totally unprepared for it too. I just knew that there were an awful lot of people that were salivating, looking at me and saying: ‘Now this is what we’re going to do with you, boy!’ I felt quite manipulated at the time. I was naive and I was young and I did basically what they asked me to do.”

The group had more hit singles, including a Top 40 remake of “Breaking Up Is Hard to Do,” which charted in 1972. Their *Greatest Hits*, *Shopping Bag* (complete with an actual plastic bag), and *Crossword Puzzle* albums all went gold through 1973.

Everything came to an abrupt end in 1974, when the series was canceled. The show could have continued, they even added a few new characters in the last season, but David was actually the reason the show ended.

“I hate to take credit for it now,” he says, “but I had my contract renegotiated after the first year, so that I was leaving the show [in 1974]. In the last season, you might remember, they kept trying to bring the Williams twins in; they brought Little Ricky in, tried to bring in new, young blood, I think to try and fill the gap that I was going to leave. I

really felt the show could have gone on easily without me and without trying to pull something that was contrived, which is what they tried to do. It didn't work. What they did was in the last six months of the show, they changed the night. They moved us to what was considered the sacrificial lamb slot opposite 'All in the Family' [and "Emergency!" on Saturday nights]. We actually did quite well in that time slot considering, but they basically gave the show up. At the time, I couldn't wait to be done with it. I was planning a world tour and then stopping and I did. It wasn't until three or four years later I realized the ramifications that my decision had on so many people's lives. Forget about the public who no longer got to watch the show, I'm thinking specifically about all the people who worked on it. You don't think about those things and I in a way now feel a little remorseful that I didn't stick around for at least another year, so that they could make a lot more money. Anyway, you can't live for other people, you have to do what's right for you. Ultimately, I felt that was right to do at the time and I don't regret the decision I made myself for me."

During the Partridge Family years, David also had a string of solo singles that reached the chart. From 1971 through 1974, he placed four songs in the Top 40 nationally, including remakes like "Cherish" and "How Can I Be Sure" as well as "Could It Be Forever" and his last charted hit (until 1990) "Rock Me Baby" in 1974. After the series ended, he continued to release a string of singles that didn't chart in America, but did very well in other parts of the world. He recorded an album with Bruce Johnston of the Beach Boys for RCA that yielded a couple of Top 10 records in England, where he has remained incredibly popular over the years. But David could not break back onto the American charts, even though many of those solo recordings were quite good.

"Part of the problem I had with the middle seventies," David says, "is that I [was] no longer going on tour and I was no longer really working. I was doing what I always wanted to do, which was to mess around in the studio with some serious musicians. In America, you can't approach the record business like that. It takes everything to break records and unless an artist is really serious about it, I don't think radio takes them seriously. I don't think the record company took me seriously. For that reason, those songs became collectors' items in the States. In Europe the structure is a lot different, so that if

they are fans of yours, they continue to play your records when they come out. So I continued to have hits there without a whole lot of effort. I didn't have to go over there and promote them. I didn't have to tour. I wanted to put a little band together and write songs and try to demystify myself, break away from the imagery of the Partridge Family. Had I really gone out and promoted it and done a lot of television and things like that, it probably would have been a lot easier for me to do that. You don't know those things. You don't think about them at the time."

One bit of trivia most music fans don't know is that David Cassidy was the first recording artist to have a hit with Bruce Johnston's classic "I Write the Songs." David recorded it before the Captain and Tennille put it on their debut album and before Barry Manilow took it to #1 in America.

"I heard Bruce play it when it wasn't even finished. He's playing this thing and I said, 'What is that? It's beautiful!' He didn't quite have it done. He told me what it was and I said we've got to cut it. The truth of the matter is, I had a number one record in about seven or eight countries with 'I Write the Songs' before the single came out in America. The guys at RCA thought that 'I Write the Songs' was not a hit record in America."

Of course, Barry Manilow's version went to #1 in 1976. David continued to record in the mid-seventies and early eighties, with no American success. He starred in a short-lived TV series, "David Cassidy: Man Undercover," which ran on NBC from November 1978 through January 1979. David married actress Kay Lenz in 1977, splitting in 1981. His second marriage (1984) lasted less than a year. He continued his European success with a Top 5 smash in 1985, "The Last Kiss," and a tour of England that resulted in a two-disc *Live* album that same year. He then experienced a run of bad luck with record companies, something that had been plaguing him throughout his career. Bell records was bought by Arista in 1974, which ended his hits on that label. RCA underwent major changes while he was recording for that company.

Just as "The Last Kiss" was becoming a huge hit, that label went under too. In 1988, he was getting ready to record an album for release in the U.S. on MCA, when the company's entire staff was fired.

David was feeling a little snakebit and decided to return to the theater and acting in the mid-eighties. That's when things began to change.

"I kind of abandoned the idea of making another record," David says. "I had some great songs, I thought. I played them for a few people, in fact Asia covered one of them. I was doing a radio show in L.A. in 1989 and played some songs for them on the show. That morning, I got three offers from record companies to make a deal. I decided that I wasn't going to go into this and invest any more of my life, time, hopes, and dreams in something that wasn't going to ultimately be what I hoped. I signed with a company that really wanted me to do what I wanted to do, Enigma records."

David's album on Enigma came out in late 1989, with the single "Lyin' to Myself" reaching the Top 40. It was his first chart appearance since 1974. He even toured the country, playing some of the old Partridge Family tunes.

"I thought I would never want to do some of the old stuff again. In fact, on hearing the tape of the old Partridge Family songs, I thought, there's a new slant on how to do this and how to do it honestly and have fun with it. I realized that there is a place for me to do it and integrate it into the stuff I'm doing now. I'm taking a new approach to the songs as well. It's a little heavier than it used to be."

Unfortunately, right after "Lyin' to Myself" hit, Enigma records became the next label to go under while David was signed on. The comeback album disappeared from the charts after selling a modest amount. David now records for Scotti Brothers records and even wrote the song adopted officially by the city of Los Angeles after the riots of 1992. And Cher recorded a song called "I'll Never Stop Loving You" that David and his third wife, Sue Shifrin, had written for her *Love Hurts* album.

David Cassidy is currently working on his new recording career. For the most part, he looks back fondly upon 1970, the year he was twenty and "The Partridge Family" began.

"There's no other way to look back upon it," David says. "It was a great opportunity and when you're going through it and living your life, you don't really know to savor all of the magic that you do later on, when you know that it was just golden stuff. That people respond to my work for me is the greatest compliment, and the way people

reacted and responded from the very beginning was a bit overwhelming to me. I feel blessed. I feel very lucky that I got to do what I did.”

David reacts to the way he has been treated by music critics over the past three decades:

“I have taken a lot of heat about the stigma; trying to live the stigma down of being a ‘teen idol’ and ‘heart throb’ and all of those, what are now negative cliches. But my work and the people who have been there and have cared about what I do have made it all worthwhile. I started playing and writing music because I loved it and I still do it for that reason. I’m not doing it because I’m making a fortune, because I’m *not* making a fortune and because it isn’t about that. There’s a part of me that every time I pick up a guitar and stand at a microphone, remembers the first time that I watched Elvis when I was five years old. There’s a part of me that remembers the first time I saw the Beatles. I remember that was the moment I decided *that* was what I had to do. For all of the things that you say about a performer, whatever it is that you feel about why they do it; the reason that I do it is because I really do love it.”

With the maturing and mellowing of the original viewers of the show, there tends to be a more positive reflection now on “The Partridge Family” than there was just a few years ago. Most of the fans who watched the show, bought the albums, went to the concerts, and carried the lunch box around are now in the twenty-five- to forty-four-year-old age group. They are able to reminisce about the old days now without feeling as silly or foolish as they might have earlier.

“You are absolutely right,” David says. “I woke up one morning and I went from being sort of this old guy that nobody really cared about and I walked down the street and people came up to me and said, ‘Wow. It’s so cool that you are who you are!’ I looked at them, sort of tilted my head and said, ‘Huh? What do you mean it’s so cool?’ I had taken a lot of heat about it for a lot of years. I guess as we look back in time upon the things that are important to us: songs, records, movies . . . things that have very fond memories; I’m pleased to be a part of so many people’s growing up, development, and somewhat of their education. I’m playing with some musicians now who have told me that the reason they started playing guitar or the reason they had become a musician is because of me. That is an incredible compliment for me.”

David's new recording career, along with the resulting touring and visiting radio stations across the country, is not entirely history repeating for him. Many things are not the same this time around:

"It's a different experience this time for me. Because the first time around I was in a whirlwind and I was working on a television show, so I had very little time to go into radio stations. I had very little time to cultivate the artistic side of it. I would just go in and sing the songs. This time I wrote it and created the idea of going back alone, on a business level. Having made that commitment to do it, it's just a totally new experience and I'm really enjoying this. Not that I didn't enjoy the other, it's just that it happened so fast and there was so much at once. I wasn't able to take a breath and say 'Boy, this is good.' I was completely out of control then, being rushed constantly. The hysteria thing made it that much more frenetic and that much less enjoyable for me to savor the moments. When you have people that really care about you and they are emotionally that pitched, it's a great compliment in any way you look at it. I feel really good that so many people liked what I did then. I feel even better now, because it is really more reflective of genuinely who I am now as opposed to just the character I played on television."

David returned very successfully to the Broadway stage in 1993, co-starring with his half-brother Shaun and Petula Clark (of "Downtown" fame) in *Blood Brothers*. The musical marked the first time the siblings performed together.

Susan Dey, meanwhile, did some television work after she left "The Partridge Family." She starred in a sitcom which aired for five weeks in the spring of 1977. The show was called "Loves Me, Loves Me Not" and was created by the same team that later developed "Soap," "The Golden Girls," and "Empty Nest." She did a few low budget movies and another TV show, this time a prime time soap in 1983, "Emerald Point, N.A.S.," also featuring Dennis Weaver, Andrew Stevens, and Robert Loggia. The show lasted seven months on CBS, ending in March of 1984. "L.A. Law" came two years later in 1986 and Dey's career reached a new high point. Susan isn't sure if a program like "The Partridge Family," which depended so much on the younger audience believing that the family actually existed and sang, could work on today's sophisticated and knowledgeable kids:

"I'll be very honest with you; I really don't know what happened.

I'm talking in terms of the illusion thing. They say everything comes in cycles. Now the interesting thing is, where I watched 'Topper' and 'Bewitched,' now they're watching, oh God, my daughter watches it. I can't remember the name of it. It's about this girl who was born in outer space or something. You see what I'm saying? It's still the same, but it's more new wave."

As for a reunion of "The Partridge Family" cast, don't bet on Susan Dey attending.

"I've heard talk of a reunion from the press, from the media. But for me, Laurie Partridge was alive. I mean, she still remains alive, but she's still fifteen. See what I'm saying? She's in some time capsule somewhere, along with the bell-bottom jeans and along with the fact that while we were filming that we were also in Cambodia. We were involved in this war illegally. You know, 'along with.' All of it is in a time capsule somewhere. I think it's impossible is what I'm saying. How do I become fifteen again? Why should I? A reunion of what? Not of the characters."

Susan Dey is working on a few movie projects for television and is still interested in acting on the big screen. She still keeps in touch with David Cassidy and continues to be a big fan of his music:

"He's wonderful. I miss his music on the air. I really do. I heard the album he had released a few years ago. It was lovely. It was really wonderful. And Danny [Bonaduce]. I have to call him. I haven't spoken to Danny in a long time. We could reminisce."

Danny Bonaduce has been the subject of many a tabloid newspaper story during the past few years. After years of drug abuse and his arrest for reportedly beating up a transvestite prostitute in 1990, he began to clean up his act and went on the road as a comedian. He even toured as David's opening act for many dates on his 1990 comeback tour. Currently, Danny is a deejay at WLUP-FM in Chicago, where he lives with his wife, Gretchen.

Dave Madden, who played Reuben Kincaid, never left TV. He's been doing voice-over commercial work for many years. Tracy now operates a bookstore in Temecula, California. As for the two actors who played Chris, Jeremy Gelbwaks (whose father transferred out of L.A., causing his departure from the show after one season) lives in New Orleans, working as a computer analyst. The second Chris, Brian Forster, is a race-car driver and instructor in California. Shirley

Jones makes few television appearances today. Occasionally, she appears in summer stock theater productions.

So, while there won't be a reunion of "The Partridge Family" television series any time soon, there is a *Greatest Hits* CD out on Arista that contains most of the biggest tunes from the show. Through the miracle of syndication, the program still airs in most markets across the country. You can tune in tonight and see the family travel by multi-colored bus to a new town. Once there, they will manage to get entangled in some thirty-minute adventure, and at the conclusion whatever troubles have occurred will melt away with the singing of a song. As their theme song says, "C'mon get happy!" If that was all they left behind for the millions who once bought their records, the lunch boxes, the trading cards, even their series of paperback books, I believe it was worth the trip.

Discography

Title	Chart #	Year
<i>As the Partridge Family:</i>		
"I Think I Love You"	1	1970
"Doesn't Somebody Want to Be Wanted"	6	1971
"I'll Meet You Halfway"	9	1971
"I Woke Up in Love This Morning"	13	1971
"It's One of Those Nights (Yes Love)"	20	1971
"Am I Losing You"	59	1972
"Breaking Up Is Hard to Do"	28	1972
"Looking Through the Eyes of Love"	39	1972
"Friend and Lover"	99	1973
<i>As David Cassidy:</i>		
"Cherish"	9	1971
"Could It Be Forever"	37	1972
"How Can I Be Sure"	25	1972
"Rock Me Baby"	38	1972