

# David Cassidy Near Collapse— PLANS TO DISAPPEAR!

■ The beautiful young boy in the white fringed crepe costume stared at himself under the harsh bare bulbs of the dressing room mirror. The features that used to be calm and relaxed are strained now, tense. A headache throbs under his brow. The on-again-off-again pain from last year's gall bladder operation is acting up, too.

He gulps down one last antihistamine with a glass of milk; the cold he's had for a week has hardly been helped by the chaotic schedule, the smothering rush of fans. He laces his delicate fingers through his light brown hair, then looks knowingly into his own eyes through the glass. "I've got grey hair already!" he whispers to the image.

"Come on, David! You're on!" his manager calls, with slightly nervous cheer. And David Cassidy takes a deep breath, shuts his eyes for a second—seeking some inner calm that, lately, has been harder and harder to find—and bounds from the dressing room to the cacaphonic screams of thousands of young girls who have travelled miles to see him. Onstage, he cries to the audience: "I love you! I love you! I love **everybody!**" The screams rise to a roar. He clutches the microphone in his fist and begins to sing. The huge sea of open-mouthed faces seems, for an instant, to be eating him alive. The teddy bears, colored beads, and **I Love David** banners they wave and throw appear to be rocks.

From the wings, a young woman named Jill—David's current girlfriend—lowers her eyes in sympathy. "He's really so calm, so gentle. Can he survive all of . . . **this?**" she wonders aloud. But David survives by imagining himself miles from this madhouse of light, heat, and screeching young girls. As he sings, he squints his eyes, and pictures his desert island—the island that he is in the process of buying now, the "place where there will be space and silence, room to be free . . ."

Finally, the concert is over. The screams rise to a crescendo and David runs offstage. "Quick! Come on!" he yells to his longtime

*(continued on page 18)*