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The D-Day sound was a high-C shriek

Five months ago when LIFE ran a cover story on the subteen idol David Cassidy, I wrote in this column what it was like to live in a household filled with Cassidy photographs, fan magazines, music and non-stop hero worship. I'd now like to report what it is like to attend a David Cassidy concert. The tickets were my 12-year-old daughter Sara's birthday present.

The preparations for D-Day (as David's Day was known) rivaled the Normandy landing. Sara and her friends were on the phone for days in advance, conducting the countdown on what clothes to wear, when to meet, what songs HE was likely to sing and, of course, how many hours to go before lift-off.

The scene of the concert was Madison Square Garden, which I had last entered on the occasion of the Ali-Frazier championship fight. The atmosphere that night had seemed electric, but that was before I knew what true excitement was. Here were 20,000 girls between the ages of 10 and 14 in a state of catatonic anticipation. The only boy I saw was my 10-year-old son Andy, silent and watchful in this ocean of screaming females. A one-hour warm-up period consisted of other singers and disc jockeys, all of whom made stimulating reference to the approaching Event. It was about as necessary as warming up an arena full of starving tigresses before throwing them a single Christian.

But at last HE bounded onstage, clad in white and gold like Sir Galahad—but with a few differences. Shiny white boots, tight-fitting white pants trimmed in gold, a broad gold sash-belt, and a wide-open-chested white shirt, loosely laced and with gold fringes long enough to strangle dragons. The vocal response of 20,000 idolators is somewhat harder to describe. You have to imagine the roar of a crowd at the moment Frazier knocked down Ali, while at the same moment Bobby Thomson was hitting his famous home run that put the Giants in the World Series, while simultaneously George Blanda was kicking a game-winning field goal in the last five seconds, just as Ben-Hur was on the last lap of his chariot race. Now put all that sound together on tape and play it without respite for an hour, not forgetting to raise the pitch all the way up to high C. The young girls of America have absolutely perfected the high-C shriek. My middle-aged eardrums were in shock after the first five minutes. Is it true that high-pitched sound of many decibels can permanently damage one's hearing?

I cannot testify to my daughter's behavior, because by popular demand she and her girl friends were sitting some distance away from me and my son so that their ecstasy could not be spied on. When it was over, I managed to collect them and herd them out of the Garden, but on the way a false rumor flashed through the crowd that HE was coming out a certain entrance. My daughter and one of her friends uttered the high-C shriek and vanished into the maelstrom.

I had taken the precaution, before the concert, of designating a meeting place in case we got separated, although I hadn't expected simple hysterical desertion. Sure enough, the girls showed up at the right spot half an hour later. By that time my hearing had recovered to the point where I understood my daughter to say, "I'll remember this day all the rest of my life." I doubt that she does, but I will.



DAVID CASSIDY

Ralph Graves

RALPH GRAVES, *Managing Editor*