

As the group splits, Val Mabbs looks at the new Partridge LP

THE PARTRIDGE FAMILY STARRING DAVID CASSIDY: The Partridge Family Notebook (Bell Bells 220). As David announces that he is definitely leaving the Partridge Family TV series — not exactly an unexpected revelation — out comes this album with the "group."

It's been seven months since David has been into the recording studio, so this selection can't be taken as reflecting his recent development. In fact David has been working on collating new material, along with musician friends, and feels that he will be producing higher quality numbers on his next solo offerings.

His relationship with producer Wes Farrell has apparently been faltering somewhat, and there is a strong possibility that this working partnership could be broken up. Generally David admits to having been somewhat apathetic about recording in the last few months, but once he has collected new material together he hopes to move into the recording studios to lay down some tracks in the way that he wants them to sound.

Having already established himself in a settled position financially, the prime consideration for David is to gain respect musically from a wide spectrum of people.

One thing is for sure, once the gruelling tour of Europe is complete, David will be doing some relaxing and will take his time about compiling another album. He finished work on the Partridge Family series at the beginning of the year but is still contracted to the company for a further year's filming.

Already the signs of David's craved individualism are showing through with the separate star billing status. Hardly surprising, since the Partridge Family have very little to do with these albums.

Shirley Jones is featured on some vocals, but the all important vocal is David's own, and even the majority of the backing vocals are supplied by male vocalists. Following on from the Rock Me Baby album — David's solo album — this seems to be something of a retrograde step in that the basic rock feel, captured there so nicely, is less evident here.

The Cassidy vocals are fine, but the material and basic arrangements seem to have less bite. So undoubtedly the Partridges have been vital to David's career, but he can only do himself justice as an entertainer by moving on to other things.

There's no bonus packaging with this album; but a cover like a replica of pages from a lined

JUST ALL DAVID CASSIDY



notebook — reproduced even down to the holes for ring files in the red-lined margin! And on the front is a snapshot style photo of the Partridges. So now for a track by track look at the subject matter.

SIDE ONE

Friend And Lover: The opening to this Farrell-Janssen-Hart composition bears a remarkable resemblance to Steam's Na Na Hey Hey — or a title very similar! Then the music moves into a fast tempo big building number. Plenty of female backing vocal sounds and a strong percussive feel. David sounding very relaxed on a rocker.

Walking In The Rain: In contrast this is a strong ballad number and just to prove the strength of material, this is composed by Barry Mann, Cynthia Weil, and if that isn't enough, Phil Spector. David using his throaty vocal sound with brass giving him added depth.

Take Good Care Of Her: "Even though I lost and you're the better man," sings David. Hardly a sentiment that his fans would agree with, but a romantic song that will obviously stir the depths of young souls! Nothing too spectacular, though.

Together We're Better: A

good mid-tempo number combining some ballad passages and an underlying good merry-go-round of keyboards. Somehow this sounds like something that might win the Eurovision Song Contest... commercial definitely, and as Tony Cole would agree no doubt, there's a strong hook in there!

Looking Through The Eyes Of Love: Well there can't be too many people around who don't know about this one already. David on a straight ballad number, already high in the charts as a single.

Maybe Someday: Some nice harmony and punchy vocals closing side one.

SIDE TWO

We Gotta Get Out Of This Place: Once upon a time there was a very gritty front line singer to a group called the Animals. Earthy they were, and this was a number recorded very dramatically by them. Here the production makes this seem something of a sophisticated number — not like when our Eric belted it out from his denim clad body — but in David's voice there is a good feel. Best part in fact is the opening and occasional passages where he is left alone, just

accompanied by stark cello sounds.

Storybook Love: Some tippy-tap sounds, ripples of harp, and it's an easy pace on a sing-a-long song. Tippy, tap, tippy tap, tip...

Love Must Be The Answer: Acoustic guitar and a somewhat Spanish feel on opening, before this moves into what seems to be just another ballad until some tempo changes come in just in time, and then it's back to that... ah, actually Mexican feel.

Something's Wrong: Wes Farrell has to be given a fair amount of points for his contributions to Cassidy recordings, because though strings and big productions can easily become wearing, he does keep little points of interest going, with wah-wahing guitars at appropriate moments, little ripples of percussion, and more.

As Long As You're There: A ballad to finish on.

So that's the round up of a fairly mixed collection... destined obviously to notch up the sales for yet another gold disc. Personally, though, I'm more interested to hear the next Cassidy offering because Rock Me Baby really seemed to be a good pointer towards stronger stuff.