

didn't want to cast him, many didn't even want to see him. After doing guest shots on schlock shows such as "Love Boat" and "Fantasy Island," Cassidy made a conscious decision to return to his stage roots. In 1979, he and Kay Lenz starred in *The Voice of the Turtle* at the Westport Country Playhouse in Connecticut. Acting workshops followed, as did more television. By 1981, he had landed the plum lead role in a revival of the George M. Cohan musical *Little Johnny Jones*.

The show, which broke attendance records during its seven-week stand at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles, truly rejuvenated Cassidy's career and his spirits. Fans flew in from around the country and the world to see him sing the Cohan classics *Give My Regards to Broadway* and *Yankee Doodle Dandy*.

"It's worth the price of admission alone to hear Cassidy deliver these timeless tunes," wrote *The Anaheim Bulletin*. "Although *Jones* boasts a fine cast, Cassidy is always a welcome figure when he returns onstage."

Most critics, however, gave Cassidy and the show tepid reviews. The *Los Angeles Times* said he "was only a beginning song and dance man." Other critics said worse. After six months on the road with the production, Cassidy left the Broadway-bound show. At the same time, his marriage to Kay Lenz ended in divorce.

By the summer of 1982, he was back on stage, starring in the play *Tribute* at the Stage West Theatre in Canada. The show, written by "Partridge Family" creator Bernard Slade, gave Cassidy a chance to stretch his dramatic talents. "Cassidy's whole performance is masterfully understated," wrote the *Calgary Sun*. "He is truly

a gracious actor, never once stepping outside of his character. This is a serious actor, working with and for his co-stars." After the show closed, he headed to Nashville to record tracks for a country-flavored solo album. The project, though, was quickly aborted.

at the Starlight Theater in August 1984. As they had during *Joseph*, the critics raved about his voice. The *Kansas City Star*, for one, called him "quite magnificent."

The week *Superstar* ended, Cassidy jetted to England to begin work on the ROMANCELP project. By Cassidy's side



Photo by Kent Simon

"People used to say to me, 'You seemed nervous, you seem defensive.' And perhaps I was nervous and defensive. Paranoid. For good reason. It seemed people were doing next to anything to be a part of me, to touch me, to be close to me. So I did the natural thing, which was to back off. To mistrust everybody. But I don't really care about how people act now. If that's who you are, that's fine. It doesn't bother me. That's as good of an example as I can give you of how I've changed."

As Cassidy continued to sip on his Calistoga at Le Café, he could only chuckle as he mulled over the severe twists and turns his 23-year-long career has taken him on. As he talked, the rhythmic sounds of Peter Gabriel's *Big Time* provided a fitting and ironic musical backdrop to his thoughts.

"I've had such an unusual career, so fragmented in so many ways," he said. "I have felt sort of like some driftwood at times in my life. Oftentimes with a focus and direction, but nonetheless kind of on my own. I think everything I have done I have done pretty much on my own merit. I haven't had the high-powered managers and lawyers going in and representing me and making it happen for me. Perhaps if I had, I would have been more successful on a commercial level. Not that I haven't achieved a lot of that in my life—I certainly have. The business is really about power and momentum. And those with the most, that can wield the most, are the most well regarded, the most well paid, the most feared, and the most desired people."

"But I don't view it that way. My attitude about it is slightly different because I have had a lot of what most people are striving for in my career at a very young age. And I found it was pretty much of a vacuum, that it wasn't about money, fame, and adulation. It didn't bring me happiness. And once you understand that, you realize you're in it on your own, for yourself. So you set about a course that makes you happy, artistically and as a human being."

For Cassidy, that course now includes a new wife, 41-year-old Sue Shifrin, and a new baby, Beau Devin, born February 8, 1991.

"My first moments of being a father have been extraordinarily rewarding," he said. "Probably the most rewarding, wonderful experience I've ever had. I guess it's because I really enjoyed being a kid. I enjoy having a kid that I can rediscover and relive my own childhood with."

Cassidy had first met Shifrin, a Miami-born songwriter who wrote *Show Some Respect* for Tina Turner, back in the 1970s. They hooked up for good when Cassidy was doing *Time* in 1987. Together, over the next three years, they would write the bulk of material that ended up on *DAVID CASSIDY*. For the new Cher album, *LOVE HURTS*, the pair penned *I'll Never Stop Loving You*. On Easter Saturday this year, they were married.

For Cassidy, the collaboration has been both personally and creatively satisfying. Shifrin has helped Cassidy hone his songwriting skills. The songs on the Enigma album were more direct and fully realized than any he had ever committed to vinyl. *Boulevard of Broken Dreams*, for instance, warned against being seduced by fame's allure. *Labor of Love* was about the strained relationship he had with his father. He and Shifrin even delved into tackling world issues, something neither had ever done before.

"Suzy and I had this song, *Message to World*, that she was dreadfully afraid"

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"I did three sides with Larry Butler, but I felt like a stranger in a strange land," he told *HITS* magazine in 1990. "They didn't get me, I didn't get them. For whatever reason, it didn't work out. I wanted to see if I could take my pop thing and graft it on to that. I didn't want to be a country artist."

More stage work followed. In 1983, he made his return to Broadway, starring for six months in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at the Royale Theater. After a limited national tour with the show, he arrived in Kansas City, Missouri, to headline in *Jesus Christ Superstar*

during the sessions was Meryl Tanze, a South African horse breeder he had dated for the last year. They were married in December 1984. By 1986, after the management shakeup at Arista and Cassidy's British tour, they were divorced.

The divorce, coupled with the court battles surrounding his Arista and Starblend contracts, preyed on his mind and left him "without a leg to stand on." Once again, he was bitter, disillusioned, and alone.

"When I got the offer to go back to England and do the musical *Time* in '87, I really did it because I needed to work," he said. "And I needed to get off the dime that I was on. It was a very thin dime. You need to move on and sometimes shed skin. I think, ultimately, from the time I did that, I decided that I needed to change a lot of patterns in my life."

To help him change those patterns, Cassidy went through three years of intensive analysis beginning in 1987. During the 90-minute sessions, which were held three to five times a week, he would bare his soul, and then pick it apart.

"Part of it was Freudian analysis, using some Gestalt therapy," Cassidy explained. "The guy who was my therapist used to say, 'I'm going to be your guide on the road map to yourself and through yourself.' That's a pretty good analogy of what he did. I mean, it has changed my life—the way I feel about myself and about other people and about my career. It enabled me to have a lot more self-insurance."

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