

They needn't have worried. Shirley was delighted.

"I see a lot of David," she replied. "He's a constant visitor to our house, and he adores his little step-brothers Shaun, Patrick and Ryan:

"If you'd asked me to pick any young actor to play 'Keith', I'd have chosen David without hesitation."

So that's how David became 'Keith Partridge' — and how the title changed from *Family Business* to *The Partridge Family*.

Is this a good point at which to fade out David's lifestory in a rosy glow?

Far from it. All sorts of things were to happen before fame really swept him off his feet!

The pilot film of *The Partridge Family* was made without any music. This is often the case. The music is 'dubbed on' afterwards. But, for David, it was a worrying period. He wanted to sing. He'd been half-promised he could sing. But where were the songs?

The scene switches to the offices of Bell Records which is the recording side of Screen Gems. The president of Bell Records wanted someone special to put together the first LP of *The Partridge Family*. The man of his choice was a handsome and brilliant producer, Wes Farrell with a fine record as a writer of hit songs.

Wes was shown the pilot film — and really flipped! In his own words:

"I saw David as a teenage idol right away, but I needed to talk out certain points with the producers. Originally I had planned to use studio singers and musicians for the LP, but now I learned for the first time that David had a voice of his own and was anxious to use it.

"We arranged for him to come to the production office and he arrived

with his guitar. We played a couple of albums and he sang along with them which was crazy because it didn't give me any real idea of what he sounded like.

"So I asked him to sing alone with the guitar and he sounded great, though I still wasn't satisfied. I asked him to meet me that night at the Western Studios so I could listen to him under proper conditions. I wrote the address down on a slip of paper so he wouldn't forget."

David put the paper in his pocket and nodded. But as he walked out of the door he somehow felt he'd disappointed Wes and failed the most important audition of his life.

When he arrived at Western Studios that night there was no one there but Wes and one engineer. Wes indicated a small high stool in the middle of the deserted studio.

"Just go out there, sit on that stool, and sing into the mike," he said. "I'll be back here listening. If you put on those ear-phones you can hear yourself just as if you were on record."

David adjusted the mike, hummed a bit to warm up, then burst into song. Recalling it afterwards, Wes said:

"I was amazed. He was really very, very good. More important still, his voice had a unique sound. I've never heard anything like it — before or since."

Wes flew back to New York to find songs that would 'fit David's sound'. He sat in the viewing room of Screen Gems there, watching the pilot film of *The Partridge Family* four times over.

Then he invited no less than 66 songwriters to have a go at composing special music for the show. There were plenty of sceptics who thought the series would never run. They must be kicking themselves today!

That didn't worry Wes too much.

His own mind was made up. He could see *The Partridges* as a big, big hit because it was young and contemporary and had a lot of depth and emotion.

Well, the CBS television network felt the same and bought the series for screening. Soon afterwards David and Wes were back in the studio, recording tracks for the first LP.

When it came to the song *I Think I Love You* David apologised. He wasn't too certain of the words. Wes was merely concerned with getting the recording levels right, but he asked David to sing along with the background music to help him.

Some magical chemistry was in the air that night. Everything sounded perfect. And when Wes said: "Okay, let's try a take," it was right first time — so right they never attempted another!

The rest is history, which David's fans must know by heart. *The Partridge Family* became America's favourite show for month after month. *I Think I Love You* soared to the top of the charts and established David as a pop star as well as a talented actor. Finally the BBC bought the series last autumn and launched it on the air with all the Bell Records hits to back it up.

If there's a more popular young person in Britain at this moment than David Bruce Cassidy, well, you name him! All David's boyhood dreams have come true, but magnified a million times. All over the world he is truly what his name means — David, the beloved.

We're a great team, you can almost hear David saying to Wes Farrell. Truly, thanks to Wes, the PF tracks have proved world-beaters for Bell Records.

