

# 'Partridge' Has a Family for Company in Pear Tree This Yule

By EDGAR PENTON

## HOLLYWOOD

That partridge in a pear tree has a lot of company this Christmas season—"The Partridge Family"—ABC's situation comedy airing Friday evenings 8:30-9 Eastern Time.

The all-the-family show is something different in the way of series, and that's why Shirley Jones agreed to star as the widowed mother of five musically inclined youngsters ranging in age from 16 downward to 5.

"The Partridge Family" is no ordinary family. It's a show business family trying to live as normal a life as possible.

"And furthermore, the mother in this series, Shirley Partridge, is a sensible no-nonsense woman who behaves as a mother should," Shirley Jones says. "The pilot script struck home. The philosophy of how to raise children coincided exactly with mine." (Shirley and her actor-husband Jack Cassidy have three young boys at home.)

The Partridges have become an in-demand top vocal-instrumental group after their first recording became a smash hit. Commuting from their home in a small northern California community, they perform throughout the country.

"But mother is the boss," Shirley emphasizes. "Besides, I'm bigger than they are."

Playing members of the family are David Cassidy (Miss Jones' stepson in real life) as Keith, 16; Susan Dey as Laurie, 15; Danny Bonaduce as Danny, 10; Jeremy Gelbwaks as Chris, 7, and Suzanne Crough as Tracy, 5. Dave Madden, a "Laugh-In" alumnus, plays Reuben Kincaid, their theatrical agent.

"I was struck at once by the true-to-life quality of the scripts," says Shirley. "There's plenty of humor, but the fun evolves from natural situations. I think our

show is much like the recent Dick Van Dyke series in that respect."

Shirley thinks of the Partridges as a modern-day Trapp Family ("The Sound of Music").

"Our music is different, of course. I think of it as soft rock. We've been told we sound like the Fifth Dimension—and that's certainly a compliment."

Shirley and David are the only family members who actually sing; the other voices are dubbed in.

(A single recording, "I Think I Love You," and an album, "The Partridge Family Album," are currently in release.)

"It really was a coincidence about David getting the part in the series," Miss Jones says. "He doesn't live with us—he's 20 years old and rents his own home. I didn't know that David had auditioned for the role of Keith."

"Bob Claver, the executive producer, liked David, but wanted to be sure that I, his stepmother, would have no objection. I assured Bob I hadn't, and David was signed."

Claver sees the show as "having a warm family feeling, essentially designed to amuse."

"It's a show about a family that happens to be in show business and how show business affects the family—but it's not a show about the business."

Keith Partridge is the leader of the musical group, and it is he who writes the songs. Laurie is quite interested in social causes, while Danny is the "brains" of the operation—a financial whiz. He's aptly described as "10 going on 35." The two youngest members of the family, Chris and Tracy, are intended to be typical of most children their age.

Reuben Kincaid, the family's harassed agent, claims not to be overly fond of children, but he manages to



## Making With the Rock

The Partridge Family gives out with the sound for their ABC weekly outing at 7:30 p.m. Fridays on WSIX-TV, Channel 8. Shirley Jones plays the mother of the singing Partridges. Four of the five children, from left: Susan Dey, Suzanne Crough, David Cassidy, Danny Bonaduce. Not shown: Jeremy Gelbwaks.

cope. Much of the show's comedy stems from the by-play between young Danny and Reuben—with Reuben the foil.

"Some comment was made about Shirley Partridge being a widow," Claver says. "But that really fits our show better—and it gives us more openings for different story situations. She has romantic interests occasionally."

At least one new song is introduced each week by the Partridges on the TV show.

"Basically, the music is used only when it advances the story line or when it provides background for meaningful action," Claver explained.

Another integral part of the show is the "psyche-

delic" bus—painted all colors of the rainbow—used when the family travels. And, of course, mom gets the privilege of driving it.

"It's really a chore to drive that thing," says Shirley. "I'd never driven a bus before, much less anything that wasn't automatic."

Shirley feels she's back in the chorus as a member of the singing Partridges. She started her career as a nurse in the Broadway production of "South Pacific" and then was signed by Rodgers and Hammerstein for the role of Laurie in "Oklahoma!"

David Cassidy, primarily a singer, sees "The Partridge Family" as a great opportunity to further his act-

ing career.

"I relish the chance to combine the two talents," David explained. "But, I must admit, I really come alive when I sing."

Born in New York City, David Cassidy made his Broadway stage debut as the teen-age lead in the Allan Sherman musical, "The Fig Leaves Are Falling." Since then he's had numerous guest-starring roles on television.

Susan Dey, with her natural beauty, was one of the top-10 junior models in the country when selected to play the older daughter in "The Partridge Family."

"It's like a dream come true," says Susan. "Acting has always been my ultimate goal, and now, I'm inspired to learn how to sing as well."

Born in Pekin, Ill., Susan has two sisters and a brother. Her older sister is also a model. Susan's face and figure have graced the cov-

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## Cassette TV Puts You In Programmer's Seat

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In all, it adds up to a staggering price tag. This fact alone may stymie the growth of the industry.

Paul Klein foresaw that and left his post as a vice president at NBC to set up Computer Television Inc. His plan calls for the "marriage" of cassettes and cable television. Instead of buying a playback device and buying and renting cartridges, you find the show you want in a program guide. Then you dial it from a computer bank and it is immediately piped into an empty channel on your set by cable.

The problem here is that although cable television is growing, at present only about four million homes have cable.

Nearly as inhibiting as cost is that every video recorder being prepared for the market pursues a different technology and there is no compatibility between them.

The EVR uses an 8.75-mm film with two video tracks and two sound tracks. RCA Selecta-

Vision uses holograms embossed on a strip of plastic film that are converted into pictures by a laser beam. The British DeccaTelefunken system uses a thin disc like a phonograph record. All the others use the same kind of video tape as the studio video tape machines, but none is interchangeable.

Finally, there is a fear that the nation's filmmakers may not be able to meet the demand for entertainment, culture and educational shows if cassettes do go over big.

"The motion picture business as it's structured today may be too antiquated to do the job," said McDermott. "We may be dealing with a lot of independents."

### LOCATION FILMING

HOLLYWOOD (AP) — Principal photography on "Fool's Parade," starring James Stewart and George Kennedy, was recently completed. A major portion of the filming took place in Moundsville, W. Va., the actual location of Davis Grubb's novel on which the film is based.



Shirley Jones and Dave Madden monitoring their charges in the bus. From left: Jeremy Gelbwaks, Suzanne Crough, Susan Dey, Danny Bonaduce, David Cassidy.

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