

# Merchandising David Cassidy

By JOYCE HABER

## NOW People

"Be with David 24 hours a day," "Can you marry David?" "Scoop David answers 101 intimates," are some of the banner lines on the teen-age fan magazine Tiger Beat. "David" is David Cassidy of ABC's the Partridge Family, as any little girl, teen-age or younger, will tell you. Between the covers David's stand-in (she's a girl who's almost as pretty as he is) and a double-page center-fold portrait of David wearing his "luv" bead choker which you can duplicate by sending in only \$1. There's even advice on how "you can meet David" with "actual photos and exact addresses for many of the places David spends his time." Looming out in photos are the Laurel Canyon Cleaners — "David takes his cleaning and laundry here every couple of weeks" — and the Canyon Country Store "where David often stops on his way home to pick up something quick for dinner."

To save his sanity David has a roommate, a former film editor, Sam Hymen, who does those chores: it is Sam who goes to the cleaners and market.

Sam also handles a lot of merchandising for David; when David does a concert, Hyman sends pamphlets ahead to the cities. There's one called "David's private photo album" with 87 shots of young Cassidy (88 if you count

the reflection of Cassidy in the mirror). Another is "David's concert tour," with 50 photos. A third is "dynamic David Cassidy," with a teenybop text ("David's deepest personal secrets"), but only a meager 24 poses.

It all means a lot to David's managers, Ruth Aarons and Mim Flood, as well as his studio, Screen Gems. Two Partridge Family LP's have sold more than 1 million copies apiece, and a Christmas album has pre-release orders totaling more than 500,000. A single, "I Think I Love You," has sold more than 5 million records, and when David was playing a concert date in Chicago his first solo single, "Cherish," was selling the way Dr. Henry Kissinger sold Chou En-lai.

There are Partridge Family tie-ins like bubble gum, coloring books, lunch boxes, comic books, postcards, dolls — in fact, anything and everything that happens into the minds of master merchandisers. There are bootleg magazines with stories purportedly written by David: Screen Gems recently brought suit against a publisher in Chicago, although its Hollywood executives couldn't find a copy. The issue was immediately sold out.

Cassidy, with his baby face,

slight build and long silken brown hair, looks more like a superpuppy. He's the current pet of the fickle set of kids who last year worshipped Bobby Sherman and Monkee Davy Jones. On the day of my interview, the director who was shooting the Partridge segment was seven days behind schedule. Everyone on the set was uptight, most notably star Shirley Jones, who's David's normally cool stepmother in real life, and Cassidy himself.

Of the Bobby Sherman show, Getting Together, which was a spinoff from a segment of last season's Partridge Family, Cassidy says: "I think it's soft. It hasn't got the machinery. That pilot was the worst show we ever did." Even considering its tough competition (CBS's smash All In the Family), Together has had disastrous early ratings. Both David and Shirley Jones own a piece of the Sherman show, which isn't unusual for stars in the case of a spinoff.

"If I do go out, it's to eat" says Cassidy. "I think I may have seen one film this year, the one with the rats. 'Willard.' It's icky. It was not too scary. But the thought of that kid with a rat in his pocket just drove me crazy. And I saw it with my father and stepmother and he

hates rats and I'm sitting there and he's going 'ugh' and Shirley is going 'ugh.'"

David's father, Jack Cassidy, and his mother, actress-singer Evelyn Ward, were divorced when David was 5. Born in New York, an only child, David was raised in West Orange, N.J. When he was 10, his mother moved to California. He played basketball in high school and says, "That's the only sport I get into very much. I love the Lakers and UCLA. I go incognito down to the Inglewood Forum to see them. I've got this goatee they're making for me. Then I can put that on and my Panama hat and my dark glasses and no one knows who I am."

Cassidy always wanted to act. "My parents didn't discourage me or encourage me," he says. "They just told me to wait until I graduated from high school. I was thrown out of two schools. In the 10th grade, I used to cut classes. I couldn't stand it."

At school, David says, "I

was into writing a lot and music. I was always into that. I mean all my life I've been singing and playing." He plays the electric guitar and the drums, and has written some songs with producer Wes Farrel of Partridge.

David has acted in a Broadway flop (Allen Sherman's "The Fig Leaves Are Falling") and in guest spots on numerous TV shows. He's into concerts, as he would put it, in a major way. He turned down a Thanksgiving weekend date in Manhattan's Madison Square Garden. "It's a little too early to go in there," says his manager. "We know we'd get \$10,000, but the idea is to sell it out."

"We think David has a chance far and above his predecessors in the teen-age thing — His ability to act, his singing. His singing is good and getting better. We're starting to get a big underground from the music magazines. Rolling Stone and Cream and others back East gave great reviews to his Sound Magazine album."