

David Cassidy

Wows The Girls

By JOAN ENGELS

Who is David Cassidy?

To a mother, he's the boy whose face covers the fan-magazines scattered about her otherwise tidy house. To a father, he's the kid on the posters in his daughter's bedroom. To older brothers, he's the guy whose voice blares out of their sister's record player. "I Think I Love You" a hundred times a day.

But to millions of American girls, beginning with the 7-year-olds, he's simply "DAVID."

Cassidy bears the burden of idolatry gladly. "I was ready for it — I wanted it," he says. "I just wish every guy in the world could be me for 10 minutes and know what its like to receive all that enthusiastic love."

His star-base is the weekly ABC-TV series, "The Partridge Family," which premiered in September 1970, is currently on re-runs and is now filming for the fall in Los Angeles.

Cassidy, 21, is Keith, the oldest son of the fast-moving musical family headed by his real-life stepmother, Shirley Jones. He got the part less for his singing talent, which nobody bothered to ascertain at casting-time, than for his obvious appeal to the pubescent — and pre-pubescent — female audience.

"SUCCESS had a lot to do with timing," he says, and adds more or less modestly: "I had the face they were looking for at the time they were looking for it. After I'd done some especially good dramatic shots on 'Marcus Welby' and 'Bonanza,' the fan mail was heavy."

Screen Gems gambled that his guileless boy-girl face would be a hit with the bubble-gum set. The organization also had an idea that his unimposing physique — he weighs 130 dripping wet — would be just what the little girls, and presumably their parents, were looking for: an unthreatening, un-Presley-like pin-up boy.

The surprise was that he could also sing. In fact, a studio voice was used on the show's pilot and it wasn't until musical producer Wes Farrell auditioned his voice that David came into his own as a singer.

Flushed with his new-found voice and his considerable ambition, young Cassidy has now hit the concert trail. Backed by an entourage of 11 musicians, he bounds on stage in a laced-front, plunging neckline white costume totally unlike his polite television image.

"He wears his pants tighter than Tom Jones — and for the 11-year-olds," one uneasy father observes.

Cassidy darts before his audience like Pete Maravich guarding Walt Frazier, delivering songs from the two Partridge Family albums for little girls who've spent the winter closeted with their phonographs. One bar and they squeal with anticipatory delight which swells to hysteria and then subsides into rapt attention.



THE ADULATION would terrify most men. Cassidy, though, is no "civilian," but to the manner born. He is the son of actor Jack Cassidy and actress-singer Evelyn Ward as well as stepson of Shirley Jones.

He spent much of his youth in Hollywood, sporadically attended Los Angeles City College and teed up in the profession with guest shots on a variety of TV programs.

He now lives with guitarist Steve Ross and Sam Hyman, a school chum, in a multi-level house in the Hollywood Hills, replete with two mongrel dogs, a pool table, a sunken bathtub and a swimming pool.

It is his second recent home. He was forced to move from a previous one in the dead of night because fans had taken to languishing on his balcony.

"Some of my fans are really weird," he notes, impressed in spite of himself. "One group even hired a private detective to trail me."

Cassidy drives a Corvette Stingray. It is registered in the studio's name to thwart hoards of girls will-

ing to pour through the records of the motor vehicle bureau in search of his home address.

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BUT EVEN maximum security precautions don't allow him real privacy. Recently he went hiking near Big Sur, a desolate California spot overlooking the Pacific Ocean. He hadn't washed for a couple of days, his hair was greased back and he sported lovebeads and a headband. "And believe it or not," he proclaims, "I even had a little something growing on my chin."

He was enjoying his anonymity in a local restaurant when the waitress asked that he move to a corner table. "We've got 43 Girl Scouts coming in 10 minutes," she explained. "One of them was bound to have recognized me, so I gulped down the rest of my meal and escaped just as their bus pulled in," he says. And ruefully he adds: "I think I can take being an idol for just about two more years."

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