



(Staff Photo by Chuck Horne)

SCREAMS DROWNED OUT THE MUSIC

David Cassidy Came To Town And The Kids Went Wild

By **BILL HOCKSTEDLER**
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President Nixon should call in David Cassidy as a special consultant on how to win friends.

That's not a personal opinion, either. There were about 50,000 sub-teen-agers at the Hampton Roads Coliseum Saturday night who will vouch for him... every one of them, including my own three. Did somebody say there weren't 50,000? Had you been sitting in front of the stand Saturday night you'd have sworn there were. (Actually there were 8,000).

David Cassidy is a rather active young man of some 22 years who cavorts about the state and allegedly sings. This is no criticism of his vocal ability. I say allegedly because anybody sitting as close as we were couldn't tell if it was singing or not. Obviously David has some ability, but truthfully, after hearing his Partridge Family recordings it would be hard to compare them with the coliseum con-

cert. (My own sons have everything the Family has ever done, it seems, and play them often... too often.)

Those beyond the pale of the generation gap (and musically it's wider than you think) sat smiling, frowning and often covering their ears while their offspring from roughly 6 through 17 generally conducted themselves in untrammelled fashion. There was a lot of head shaking from the older folks, who seemed to forget the same type of carrying-on took place with Elvis Presley, the Beatles and others among the modern crop. Reaching back a bit, you 40-to-50-year-olds can probably recall those "silly" teen-agers fainting and doing all sorts of weird things whenever then-singer Frank Sinatra sang back in the early 40s. My own mother said there was some of the same type of thing that went on with Rudy Vallee, too. More Victorian, of course.

But there is a major difference here. Communication.

The dubious help of the big eye or the boob tube—television. Most of those kids at the coliseum probably got their first taste of David Cassidy (alias Keith Partridge) on television. All Partridge-Cassidy had to do Saturday night was mention the name of a particular song the Partridges had done on television and the opening bars were interrupted by a long, dizzying shriek from his followers. Down front, over the banshee-screaming you could recognize snatches of the song. Something about "the direction of Albuquerque" sounded vaguely familiar. Then there was one about "I think I love you". A rather frantic group of the 12-to-15-year-old set clustered near the corner of the stage went into absolute hysterics whenever the hard-working young man came anywhere near that side of the stage. Which he did frequently to sip from a paper cup or mop his sweating brow.

Any gyration, arm move-

ment, shake of the head or twitch brought paroxysms of jet-engine shrieks from the kids — mostly the girls. (Sound familiar, dad?)

Young Mr. Cassidy is, or should be, probably a little surprised at the greetings he obviously receives wherever he appears. He is an image to the younger set. And they love him.

There is another big difference, and I can only speak from first-hand recollection of the older generation. Frank Sinatra, bless his retired vocal chords, did little other than sing. Of course, Frankie, as he was popularly called then, always looked as if he was about to collapse from utter exhaustion which may account for his lack of gallivanting about the stage, leaping up and down and doing all the other physical parts of singing (or performing) currently popular. But apparently Frankie didn't have to. His voice was enough to draw bonfire-snuffing sighs and shattering shrieks from his le-

gion of female followers.

Other than age differences, the coliseum crowd reacted the same way to Cassidy. He is to the teenyboppers of today what Sinatra was to the saddle shoes and bobby sox crowd of an older generation.

Fortunately for young mothers and fathers of today, Cassidy is a healthy-looking, clean-cut young man. What merit his voice has, only time and the Partridge Family will tell. But the kid is a hero to the younger set, something not sneered at, something to believe in, something the kids follow and adore even if he only waves at them. They appear to have chosen well, David is what my own mother would have called a "nice young man."

Let the purists make snide comments about "bubble gum music". David Cassidy has, as they say in Hollywood, a "schtick." And he looks like the kind of entertainer moms and dads have no qualms about letting their kids holler about. I even liked him.

David was about an hour and a quarter late getting to the coliseum but to those kids in the audience it didn't matter. Even my own six-year-old, usually in the sack about 9 or earlier, was bright-eyed and bushy-tailed when the thing broke up about 11. But then, as one obviously unappreciative parent said, around a rather strained yawn, "Who could sleep with all that racket going on?"

Most terse comment of the night came shortly after it was all over and the final ear-splitting shriek had rattled around the coliseum's rafters and died. "Now I know," came the sage statement, "why the young kids don't listen to their parents. They can't hear us." There may be some truth to it. My own ears were still buzzing and ringing when we left the place.

David Cassidy worked hard Saturday night. Almost as hard as the kids' vocal chords. He talks like a boy, he looks like a boy and he See David, Page 12, Col. 1