

# David Cassidy: How an Idol Survives

By JOYCE HABER

(c) 1971, The Los Angeles Times

"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 are articles giving David's dimensions (5 feet, 8, inches tall, 125 pounds, shoulder width 17 inches, inseam 31 inches, inches, ring size 6—pinkie); descriptions of David's stand-in (She's a girl who's almost as pretty as he is) and a doublepage centerfold portrait of David wearing his "luv" head choker which you can duplicate by sending in only 1 dollar. 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 (2080 Laurel Canyon Blvd.)—"David takes his cleaning and laundry here every couple of weeks!"—and the Canyon Country Store (2108 Laurel Canyon Blvd.) "Where David often stops on his way home to pick up something quick for dinner!"

Boppers and teenyboppers, just don't you count on that. "I don't get mobbed really," says the 21-year-old object of all those junior affections, "because there are places I just don't go. If I were to go to Disneyland or the zoo—and the supermarket would be insane." 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.

What it all means know 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 totalling 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 publisher in Chicago, although its Hollywood executives couldn't find a copy. The issue was immediately sold out.

Behind the closely-guarded gates of the Columbia Ranch, where both the Partridge



TEENYBOPPER IDOLS BOBBY SHERMAN, DAVID CASSIDY  
David Isn't Impressed With His Rival's New Show

Family and the new Bobby Sherman show are filmed, I came upon David Cassidy talking to a reporter and photographer for a brand-new teenage magazine that will appear the first week in January. Called Star, it's the latest brainchild of millionaire publisher Bob Peterson (Hot Rod). Each issue will feature a superstar—and the superstars start with David.

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 Friday, 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.

They rehearsed and shot a minute-long scene over and over, with Shirley telling the director "it feels easier the other way" about a simple crossing. The next day David left for concerts in Miami and Tampa, returning Monday at 3:30 a.m.: his studio call was 7:30 on Monday. He's planning to visit Europe in December for a five-week vacation: "I can't wait. I'm just so tired," he said. Then added, "I haven't had to get my passport. I gotta get a haircut too."

We drove to the Yankee Peddler, a nearby Burbank restaurant for lunch. Like many such studio-hangouts, its distinguishing feature is darkness. The maitre d' came forward: "Hi, Bobby," he greeted David, mistaking him for teen-age idol-competitor Bobby Sherman. Cassidy grunted. His thick brown eyebrows knitted together.

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' 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.

The maitre d' now a foot away, apologized for mistaking him for Bobby. "I call Bobby David, too," he tried. (He should try a few bulbs with higher wattage.) David, the superpuppy, relaxed. All

superpuppies, I guess, are alike in the dark.

Which may be why David, who's had to move twice in less than a year, chose midnight to tote his belongings from one house to move again from his three-level house in the Hills with sunken tub and pool table: "Last night I picked up my mother at the airport and I came home and

they knocked on my door," he explains, referring to the kid-fans who constantly ferret him out. "And the phone kept ringing and a girl on the other end would giggle. It rarely happens that someone gets my phone number."

The reason it rarely happens is that Cassidy changes it more often than Ryan O'Neal changes dates. His managers keep his phone number coded: he's listed as "Z" in the phone book, so even the office secretaries won't know it—or didn't until this appeared in print. "It's not as though you have Cary Grant's or Charlton Heston's number," says Flood. "A 10-year-old isn't going to call them up and giggle."

"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." He gestures, the family crest ring on his pinkie, a gift from his father, flashing.

"I heard about this private school, Rexford, that had five

See CASSIDY, Page 8

## David Cassidy

Continued from Page 3

kids in a class. And I thought maybe they'd really teach something. I was behind because I'd failed, but I made it up. They'd deal with you like an individual. They'd say, 'What's wrong?'"

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 date on Manhattan's Madison Square Garden on Thanksgiving weekend. "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 tell 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."

"He's not the bubble-gum-rock performer with thousands of little girls screaming. You can go to a concert and enjoy him—between the screams."

Still, the screaming, bubble-gum-rock side can't be ignored. Last July, Cassidy had his gallbladder removed at L.A.'s Mt. Sinai hospital. Half a dozen female fans broke into his room while he was still being fed intravenously. "I didn't know whether to hire 24-hour private nurses or the Bel-Air Patrol," says manager Aarons, an effervescent lady whose lavish home-office boasts hundreds of autographed photos ranging from one of John Philip Sousa to dozens of David Cassidy. She also keeps a dart-board with President Nixon's photo as the target, a myna bird named Henry, and a sign that warns: "Remember An Actor Killed Lincoln."

Her actor-client Cassidy is mostly apt to go on killing little girls. We returned to the ranch after lunch, where David was to resume his shooting. A gray Corvette pulled up behind us, and Cassidy waved to its driver. He was Kent McCord, the star of Adam-12. The star was bringing his little daughter to meet her idol.