

MITCH VOGEL

He wouldn't want to be David Cassidy --at least not all the time

By Irv Letofsky
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It's not easy being a simple Star, but SUPERSTAR!

"I'm not really in it for that," says Mitch Vogel, who just turned 16, "because I would hate to be like David Cassidy or somebody like that because that poor guy must be mobbed every place he goes, and so many rumors are started about him. I couldn't see, like 'Mitch Vogel's Love Life Revealed!' or something like that."

Young Mitch was visiting the Twin Cities on a promotion tour, at some sacrifice ("I had a date this weekend but I had to cancel"). He goes back into rehearsals this month as the freckled little-boy interest on NBC's "Bonanza."

In his rare spare time he may be playing state fairs here and around with some magic tricks, some big illusions and a middle-rock group he formed in recent months. "I think they're gonna call it 'The Mitch Vogel Show' or something. This is hard for me to comprehend," he said.

The young actor has some fine credentials. Witness his performance in "The Reivers" with Steve McQueen and Rupert Crosse. He has been considerably in demand for various nice-kid roles. But he is, admittedly, not much in demand among those consumers who eat mostly bubblegum and scream as a way of life.

"It's the fan magazines that make you big. They keep me alive, but not as much as David Cassidy. They'll maybe have a little item like 'Mitch Vogel started a new group' or once when I got a haircut that had 'Mitch Vogel got a haircut . . .'"

"My mom and dad were split up, and I happened to mention to one of the people how my father happened to be at the theater when I was doing my first play ('Tom Sawyer' at Theater in the Round, Anaheim, Calif.) and he didn't know I was gonna be there.

"Then he saw the name and said it must be me, so he came back afterwards and it was a happy reunion.

"Well, they made it out, well, like the title was 'Mitch Vogel Asks: Who's the Stranger Knocking at My Dressing Room Door . . .'"

"Like he was searching for me the world over . . ."

Then you don't want to be David Cassidy?

"Not really. I've heard he's had to move about three times because people were bugging him." He paused a bit and retreated: "Well, I wouldn't mind being him for a day or so. But not all the time.

"I wouldn't mind having all the fans he does at all. I like fans, but it's just that . . . well, like now he has to have a bodyguard wherever he goes because I heard he got hurt at a recording studio or something."



(Dick Kleiner quotes David C. from Hollywood: "The adulation is a drag . . . I can't do much dating. The girls I meet are either one of two kinds — they're either too aggressive or, to compensate, they're too much the other way.")

Vogel goes on: "For every fan — this is what I read in an article" — and then he laughed about being caught reading such articles—"and it said something about in every 10,000 fans there's one person that's jealous of him and wants to hurt him. So if you take all of his fans put together, you've got 10,000 who want to kill him. That's really creepy."

He said Bobby Sherman, who ranks right up there on the charts with David, told him once he wasn't scared for himself but he is afraid people will get hurt, a girl faints and is trampled.

Even minor stardom bugs young Mitch: "When 'Bonanza' isn't shooting I go back to regular school and to classes and stuff like that, Burbank High. Some of the kids, they don't know how to take me, seeing me on TV. They just don't want to accept the fact that I'm just a person. It gets kind of frustrating sometimes. You know, you walk by them in the hall and you hear this 'groovy star' stuff all the time."

Much of Mitch's financial achievement — 20 percent — goes into a trust fund for him when he's 21 years old. The rest goes for the care and feeding of his mother, his grandmother and his sister.

"My grandmother is too old to work and my sister is too young, and my mom just got out of the hospital a year ago and I've been buying the groceries. So I try to keep expenses down."

He's heavy into records, a new stereo and some guitars. The rest goes into the bank for college, possibly the new California Institute of the Arts. He wants to be an actor forever.

"Sometime I'd like to play, well, a drug addict or something, just a bad kid. Most of my parts have been the hero who saved the girl from this or saved my family from the bushwackers. It would be fun just to play a baddie."