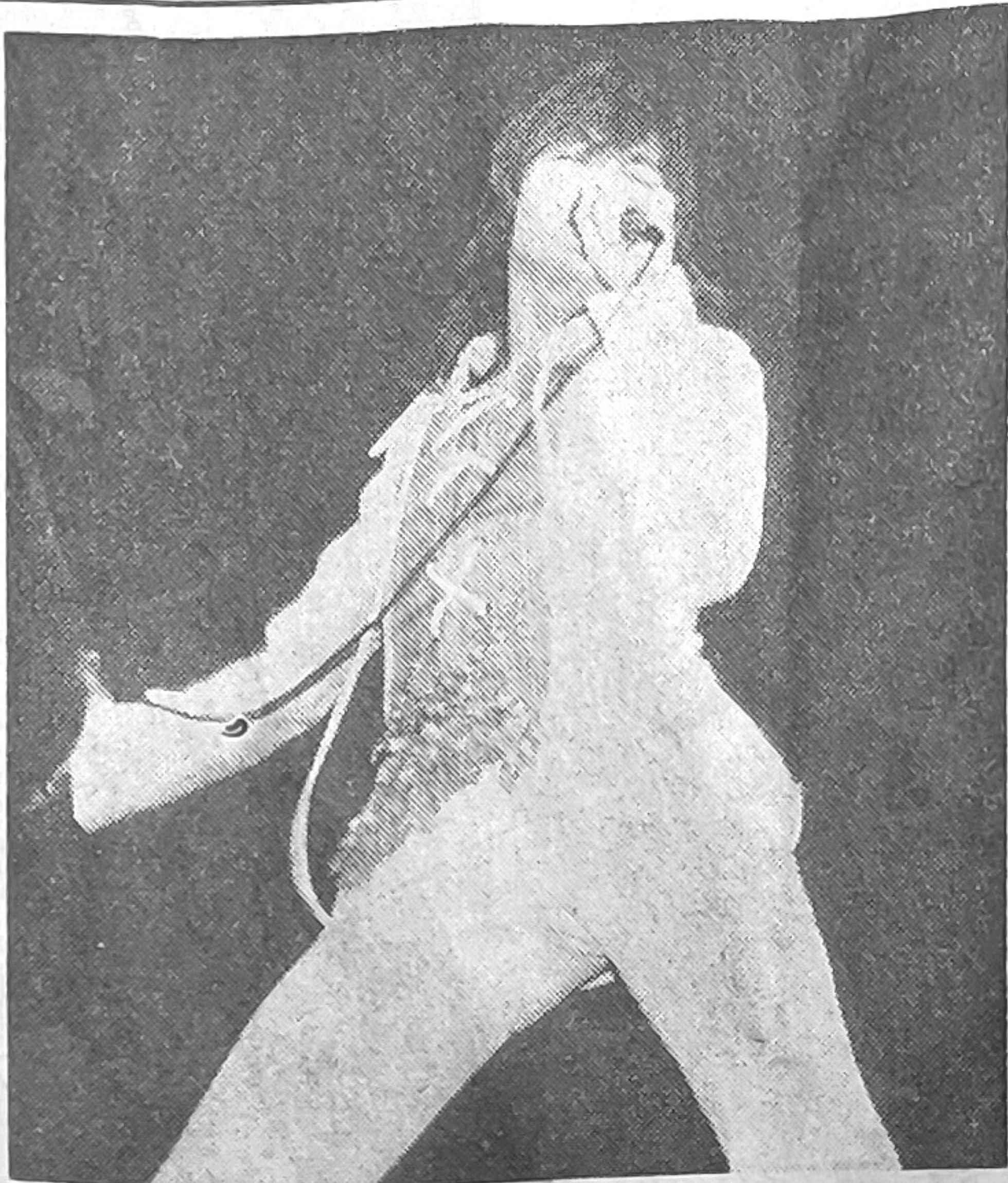




David . . .



Register Photos by Dan Collins

. . . and his young admirers.

Cassidy Performs At The Arena—And The Young Girls Just Love Him

By DAN COLLINS
Register Staff Reporter

A few fat drops of water fell from a girder near the Arena roof and burst like flak on the forehead of a 10-year-old girl. She wasn't paying any attention. It was three minutes before David Cassidy, the slight, milky faced idol of adolescent America, was scheduled to appear on stage.

"Sarge, I've got a 7-year-old girl who won't move—what do I do?" said a muscular New Haven patrolman. Eight policemen in front of the stage were attempting to move back a polite but persistent legion of little girls who just wouldn't retreat. "We're used to 'hard-rock' concerts," said Sgt. Robert Silva. "Nothing like this," he added with a mixture of good humor and exasperation.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Purvis of Madison brought their children, Danny, 10, and Debbie, 7, to the concert. They had front row seats about 15 feet from the cavernous speakers that carry

the ear-searing sounds from the stage to the back of the Arena.

Mr. and Mrs. Purvis were smiling. Both had stuffed their ears with cotton.

Backstage, the police were engaged in a friendly game of guerrilla warfare with Cassidy worshippers. Knots of young admirers, often spearheaded by their more aggressive parents, were attempting to close in on the stage door where David would enter the Arena.

Had View

Mrs. Claire Talmadge of Cheshire had located a broken pane of glass that enabled her to peer out into the Arena parking lot.

"I'm watching for my children, of course," she said with a trace of embarrassment.

"This is the highlight of Carolyn's (her daughter's) life," Mrs. Talmadge explained.

Carolyn, 8, didn't eat much the day of the concert. "All day Saturday she looked at the clock and demanded to know

how many more hours it would be before David," Mrs. Talmadge confided.

Most of Cassidy's worshippers are girls between the ages 6 and 13.

Typical of his more "mature" followers are Eileen Lebon and Susan Zetuner of New Haven. Both said they were "nearly 14."

"He is not my sex substitute," said Eileen, with as much sophistication as she could muster. "He is a great singer, a great actor and very sexy," she added dispassionately.

"He's a much better singer than actor," said Susan precisely.

Cassidy has many plus-13 fans, too, but it was difficult to find them among the 6,000 people who jammed the Arena Sunday.

"I brought my little brother," said one 16-year-old girl.

"We had an extra ticket," explained a smiling 18-year-old.

"My mother is sick," said

another 18-year-old as she pointed to a brooding boy of about 7.

They Relate

The girls relate to Cassidy on a strictly personal level. "We have lots in common," said Donna Riccio, 13, of Hamden, in an authoritative tone of voice.

Donna knows she has a lot in common with David because she reads the fan magazines. Cassidy pushed such old favorites as Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis from the covers many months ago. Sample articles: "The other girl in David Cassidy's Life." (His mother) and "The woman in David Cassidy's Life" (Also his mother).

Donna's mother, Mrs. Nora Riccio, said her daughter faithfully tapes each performance of the Partridge Family, a weekly TV series that stars Cassidy.

"Nobody in the house moves while that show is on," she explained.

Cassidy represents a mixture of fantasy and reality for girls like Donna. For "younger girls" ages 6 and 7, he is often pure fantasy.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Charnin of Teaneck, N.J., brought their 6-year-old daughter, Jill, to the concert.

For Jill, he is 'Keith' not David Cassidy," said Jill's mother, Judith. Cassidy plays Keith Partridge on the TV show.

The person she sees on the stage is the same person she sees on television," Mrs. Charnin added.

Cassidy Shrine

At 6, Jill has all of "Keith's" albums and her room, like that of most of the other girls, is a David Cassidy shrine.

After the crowd has been entertained by a warm-up group of musicians that travel with Cassidy, The Moment arrives.

David bursts through a backstage door and rushes on to the stage. He had refused to dress at the Arena because of "security" problems at the coffin-like structure. At the end of the performance he will race to a waiting limousine and depart—a bitter disappointment to many of his fans.

David's bounding entrance provokes a predictable shower of shrieks and squeals. It sounds, indeed, as if 6,000 "Let's Make a Deal" winners have been packed into the old building.

"He's delicious," moans a girl.

"He's everything," sobs another.

Other gushing exclamations include "My God, he's real" and "David, David!"

Cassidy's act consists of a

series of post-Presley gyrations and an occasional Bostoi Ballet type leap from the floor of the stage. And, of course, he sings.

"I think I love you," Cassidy croons. He may not mean it, but it's good enough for his fans who explode with delight.

His entry also provokes a fusillade of paper balls that tattoo the stage, Cassidy and the musicians. There are no Cassidy haters in the crowd—the girls are simply trying to find a way to "touch" their hero.

One wad of paper "touches" Cassidy in the eye, however, and he pleads with the fans to stop bombarding the stage.

The act is wholesome, bubbly, superficial. It contains none of the explicit sexuality of the early Elvis Presley on the Beatles. This fact meets with parent approval. They usually describe Cassidy as "cute" or "nice."

David carefully organizes his act to achieve a frenzied crescendo.

"There must be something to get us together," he swoons. The girls agree. "Together, David," murmurs one 8-year-old.

By the time Cassidy begins to sing "Cherish," the New Haven police, who controlled the area in front of the stage at the beginning of concert, have been driven back into a tight perimeter formation only a few feet from the singer.

A few moments later, Cassidy bolts from the stage followed by an outpouring of adoring shrieks from his admirers.

Too Abrupt

Th abrupt arrival and departure disappoint many of his fans. The concert began at 3 p.m. and by 1:30 about 300 youngsters had clustered a

various points around the arena hoping for a glimpse of the star.

Mrs. Gail Sweet of Woodbridge and her daughter Tashie, 9, waited for about an hour behind the Arena.

Mrs. Sweet admired Gene Kelly in high school but "It was nothing like this," she said.

Cassidy doesn't arrive until well after 3 p.m. and Mrs. Sweet, Tashie and the other fans seek substitutes.

Mrs. Sweet and her daughter get the autograph of Bill Gibson of Baltimore—Cassidy's chauffeur for the concert. This reporter gleefully signs three David Cassidy photographs.

Mrs. Barbara Ann Alexakos of Gardner, Mass., and her children, Michele, 10, and Nicholas, 12, join the long line in front of the Arena. By 2 p.m. reports of Cassidy's arrival have grown as common as UFO sightings.

Mrs. Alexakos began the journey from Gardner at 8 a.m. "This is the closest he got to Gardner," she explained.

"She goes to bed with him and she gets up with him," Mrs. Alexakos said of Michele. "David worship."

Mrs. Alexakos favored Frank

Sinatra in her high school days and she was unimpressed with the outpouring of adulation for Cassidy. "We used to go much crazier over Sinatra," she explained matter-of-factly.

YMA SOCIAL

The Annex YMA will hold a social meeting tonight at 8 at the clubroom on Woodman Avenue and the speaker Louis Della Valle will discuss alcoholism. Dr. Della Valle is associated with the state's Department of Mental Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Clinic.