DAVID (EEEEE!) CASSIDY:

Undisputed Idol of the Teenyboppers Could Be Killed If They Got to Him

By HENRY McNULTY

They are selling posters at the New Haven Arena before the David Cassidy concert. A huge four-color poster, with a smiling Cassidy and "I Cherish You" in script \$2. There are souvenir script, \$2. There are souvenir lets with pictures and such things as "David's Darkest Secrets," \$1, and for 50 cents, buttons with slogans from TV commercials: "Try It, You'll Like

Those buttons seem out of place at first — why TV ads at a rock concert? - but it fits, because a David Cassidy concert is the New American Dream in action: Television come to life. David Cassidy, star of "The Partridge Family," on stage, doing all the Partridge Family songs __ just like on TV.

Only he's not playing to the TV cameras. He's playing to 6,000 screaming, swooning, flashbulb-popping fans, mostly girls under age 15. They are there to see him - possibly to be seen by him — and certainly to scream at him. How he sings is of little importance. The fact is that he is there, on stage, and maybe if they wave hard enough, and scream loudly enough, maybe he'll look in their direction.

The preparation for the concert begins hours earlier at the Arena, with the traditional chair set-up and stage outfitting. Dave Asher, who works for the promoter, explains his harried

"Well, I'm very strict about people who try to break rules and climb through windows and run up the aisles. Now you get a bunch of normal rock fans, and if they do this, you just beat them back. But how can you clobber little girls?"

That is the problem everywhere at the Arena. Outside, the little girls are crowding the doors. The few that have found their way inside are wandering around trying to locate David. Actually, he is at "a hidden spot two miles away." Nobody, of course, will say where that is.

An hour until show time. Up drives a big grey Mercedes Pullman limousine — the type that makes Cadillacs look puny - and little piping screams of anticipation arise near the stage door. David!

Not David. It is Richard G. Klotzman and his four assistants who have arrived to check out the Arena scene. They are David's personal managers, and all are in dapper doubleknitted duds. Klotzman heads the team, meeting the promoter, sizing up the hall.

The dressing room, nice as it is, won't do. There is just too much room between the stage door and the dressing room, and that means too much danger. David could literally be torn limb from limb before he reached it. The waves of unclobberable little girls could snuff him out halfway to the dressing room door.

Even if he did reach it, the room has windows. And someone tells about the time when a crowd broke in thick reinforced glass to get to David. So the dressing room idea is scrapped. David will dress at "the hidden spot" and will arrive seconds before he is to go on.

There are perhaps 75 persons between the stage and the door. They are divided, and kept behind ropes by the police. Klotzman arrives, and directs the police to move the girls back an additional 20 feet. They look skeptical — why, these are just harmless little girls! "Believe Me," he says.

There is also a great worry about the seats behind the stage. "It's too easy for people to jump from the seats to the stage," someone says, so guards are posted.

The hall is filling up. Almost everybody is holding something, whether it's a poster, a program, a banner ("I Love David") or a flash camera. The band begins to set up-11 pieces, led by a man who looks like a freaky Mitch Miller. One of the aides gets into the yachtlike Mercedes-basketball is playing on the color television inside—and the chauffeur heads for "the hidden spot."

It all starts at 3:12 p.m.—12 minutes late, but right on time

by concert standards—and as the house lights dim, the first of many piercing squeals goes up. It's not that the kids think they're finally going to see David (they expect a warm-up act), it's just that at this point, they'll scream at anything.

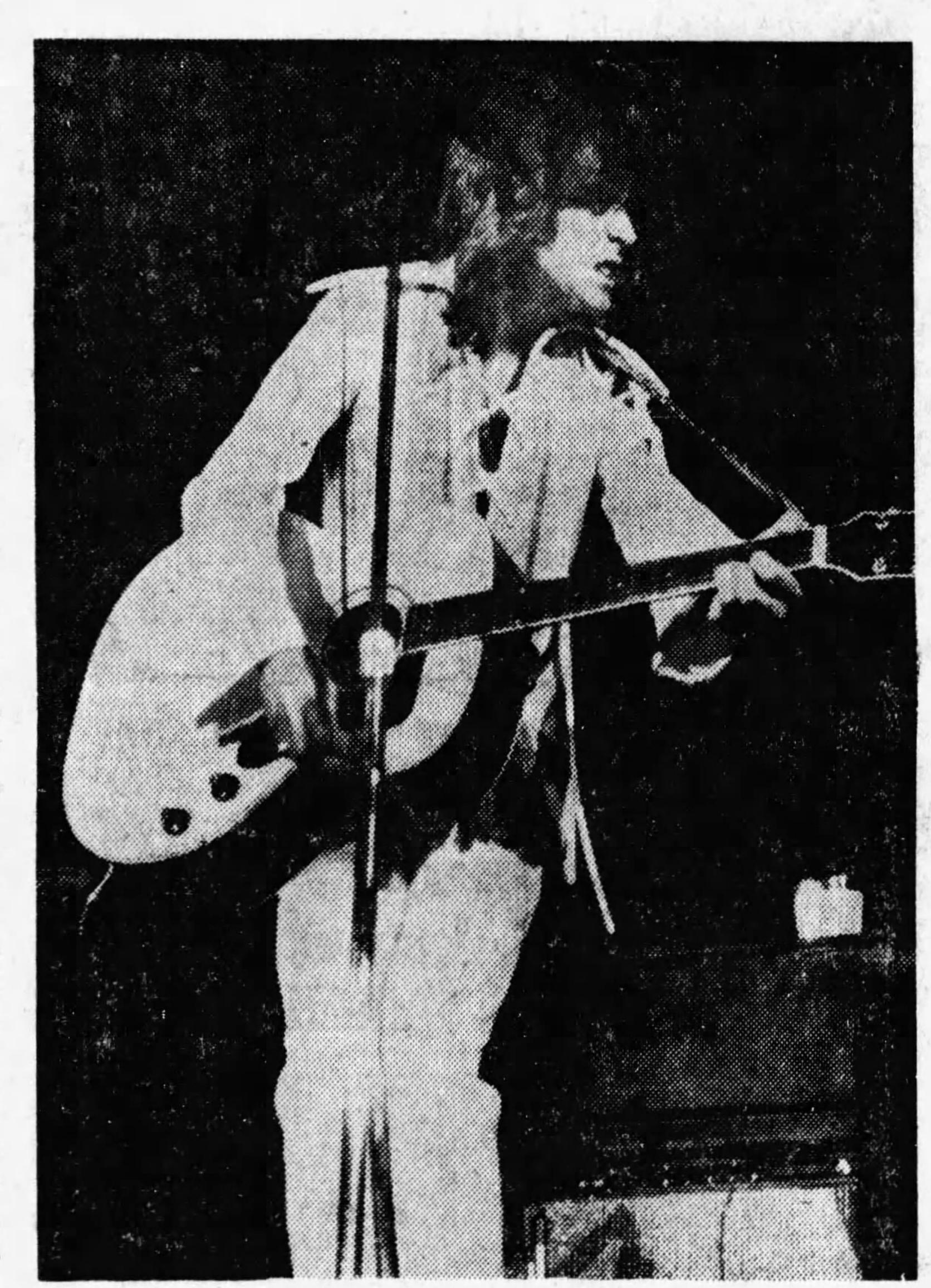
The band, and a couple of singers, go through some pop stuff -things like "Rescue Me"-and make periodic comments about David. With each mention of The Name, a squeal.

Backstage, the crowd has swelled to perhaps 100, 50 on each side of the stage door. At intermission time, they get tense, moving into place for David's entrance. A flashbulb goes off accidentally. The band files out as Klotzman asks one of the crew, "Where's a phone?"

David has, by this time, left his hiding place and is cruising through New Haven in the Mercedes waiting for the phone call. The band files back and sets up onstage. The crowd is agitated, and the occasional little squeals sound like so many baby rats.

The lights dim (screams), the spotlights come on (screeches), and the band starts playing a fast-tempo introduction.

The Mercedes is back outside the stage door. Klotzman makes a final check—about 50 uncluttered feet from stage door to stairs, policemen just so, microphone poised at the top of the



David and Gee-tar

"We're gonna do lots of tee-yewns tonight"



'Great to See Ya' Maybe he'll look in their direction

stairs—and he gets into the car. Perhaps 15 seconds pass.

NOW! The Mercedes door flies open, and Klotzman catapults out, followed by a kid with lots of hair in a white suit. It's pure football—the block and the runner—and EEEEEEE! The kids see him and there is a simultaneous blinding flash as 100 bulbs ignite at once. But David is by them in two seconds.

Up the stairs—the band is still pumping the eight-bar intrograb the mike, and YAHHHHH! That backstage scream was a mini-peep compared to the crowd reaction. And this time it's thousands of flashbulbs at once, a super-zap atomic bomb mind-blower.

And, by golly, there he is, prancing around, bumping and grinding, singing who knows what (only the screeches are audible) and smiling. A great grin on that youthful face. Hi, I'm David and it's great to see

The bumps and the grinds are the surprising thing. If Ann Corio did it, you'd call it sexy. If Liberace did it, you'd call it swishy. But David Cassidy is doing it, and he's so doggoned clean that you can only call it shocking. Why is he doing that?

The answer lies somewhere in the chemistry of little girls. It is universally acknowledged that part of Cassidy's charm is that he looks a little bit like a girlbig eyes, dimples, long hair. There is something about this odd sexual combination that makes him the present absolute undisputed teen-age idol.

There are times when his voice does come through—and, to tell the truth, it's not bad. It sounds somewhat like Ricky Nelson's voice, except less nasal (the parallels between David and Ricky are practically endless).

It's a virtual light show now, as the bulbs continue to pop and the policemen in front move like Keystone Kops, caught in the Kodak strobe.

The first break between songs is heralded by even more cries from those thousands of little scream machines. But they stop all at once, because he's going to-speak!

"We're gonna do lots of teeyewns tonight," David says (throughout, he refers to songs as "tunes"). He doesn't quite have the patter down, and there are quite a few "um" syllables thrown in. But that makes him only more adorable to the crowd, if possible, because the New American Dream is becoming more real. He's not only here, he's human!

The tee-yewns are taken from the Partridge Family albums and from David's own LP, "Cherish." The announcement of each song title is reason enough for more bellowing. On a few of the tee-yewns, he plays what he calls his gee-tar (his guitar style approximates Lesson Three of the Mel Bay sys-

Piled at stagefront are birthday gifts-David was 22 four days before the show - and cards. "David. Beautiful, adorable, lovable David," reads the wrapping paper on one present. But he prances around them, dressed in that white suit, a now-standard outfit introduced by Elvis Presley at his Las Vegas concerts and now used by many young stars.

Those bumps and grinds! Obviously, David thinks they're funny-after a particularly energetic bump, he turns to freaky MitchMiller (who is really running things up there) and -? A smile and nod from freaky Mitch: OK, kid, you're doing great. Grin from Cassidy.

Forty-five minutes into the show, he's out of breath, and gasps a little, still grinning, as he announces: "And now . . . um . . . I'd like to do a teeyewn . . . and I think . . . it's one of the most beautiful teeyewns . . . I've ever done . . . 'Cherish.' "

And EEEEEEEE! This is the one the girls have mooned themselves to sleep on, night after night—it's the title of his solo album, in script on the

front, right up there next to 'David Cassidy' . . . 'Cherish.' The girls are wild now, jumping up in the air, waving and "Davidcrying: DavidDavidDavid!" Occasionally he will give a short wave out into that great Arena blackness and a whole clump of girls, ten rows' worth, will sit down at

They are satisfied, you see. Their David has seen them and waved. The pleasure lasts a few seconds, then they are up on their feet again, waving and screeching.

At last, he sings the final number, "I Think I Love You." The band hits the opening chords, the chorus goes "Ba Ba Ba Ba" and almost everone connected with the show heads subtly for an exit.

It is easier now, because there is nobody backstage (what, wait backstage while David is out front?). Klotzman checks it out; all OK. The Mercedes is waiting, with a New Haven police car in front.

Final chord-"Goodnight!"-Down the stairs, out the door, into the car, and by the time the girls know he's gone, he's a block and a half down Chapel Street, sitting sweatily in that huge living room of an auto. By the time they have leapt to their feet, he is on the highway. By the time they realize there is no encore, he is beyond the New Haven city limits.

Tears, afterward. A sense of relaxation, of relief for the promoters. Clutching programs, posters, "I Love David" banners and those crazy little TV advertisement buttons, the girls head home. It is Sunday, and David—he looked at me!—isn't on television until Friday night.

How can they wait?