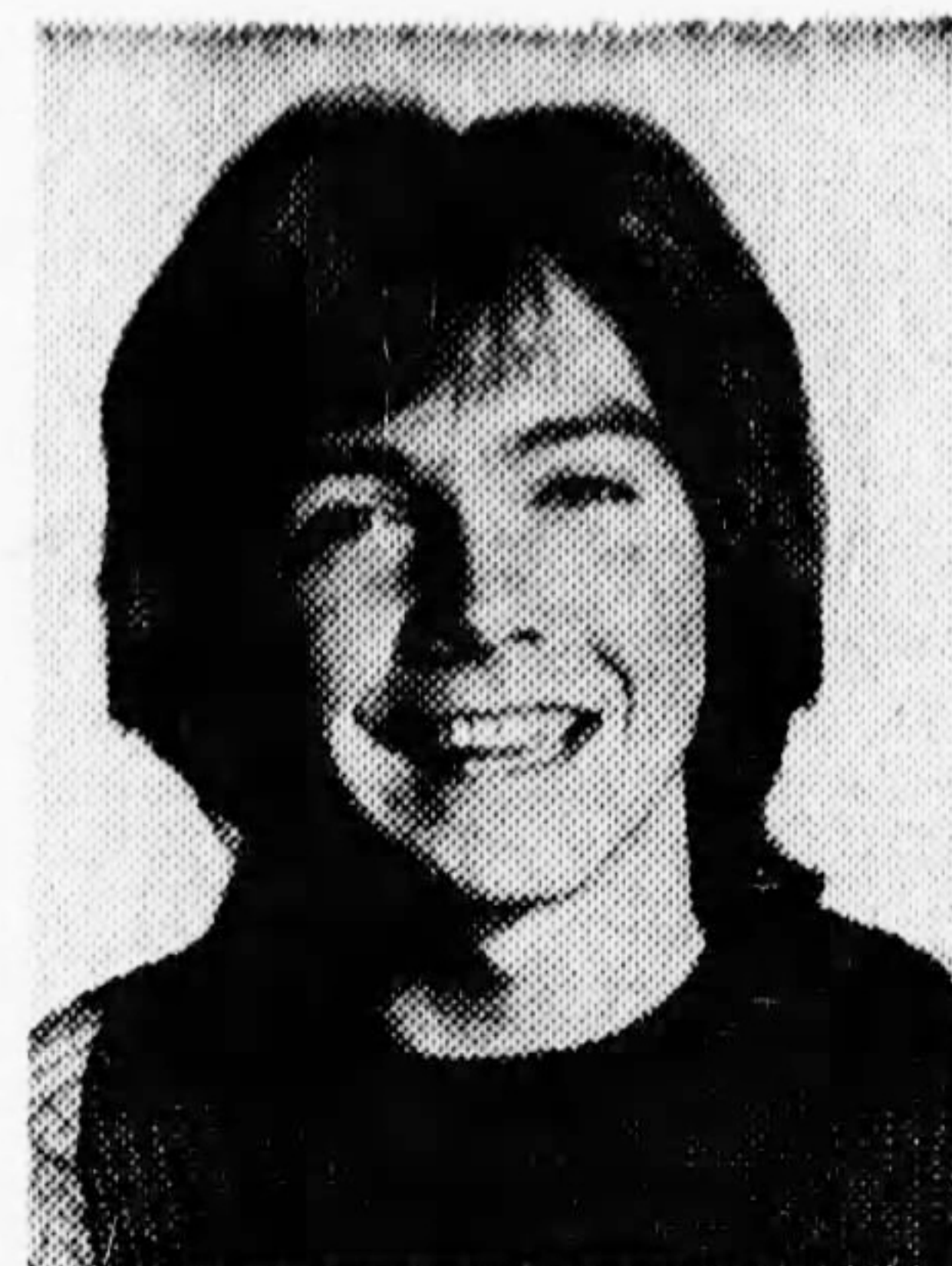


MUSIC

David, king of the teenies

By LEO SELIGSOHN © Newsday



IF YOU DON'T believe in Peter Pan, then you probably won't understand. But there's a wave of teeny love sweeping the nation today that threatens to replace passions once reserved for Barbie Dolls, tap shoes and Daddy.

The object of all this mini-madness is a 5-foot-8-inch, 130-pound child-man named David Cassidy who wears his hair down to his shoulders and sings such songs as "I Think I Love You" (5 million records sold in the U.S., England, Australia and Japan).

Cassidy's magic is the kind that gives the pre-pubescent set its first thoughts of playing hooky to get a glimpse of its idol and even maybe—dream of dreams—get his autograph!

Like Peter Pan, Cassidy made his first appearance about two years ago by flying in through a window—the electronic window that looks in on millions of American living rooms and dens. One glance

David Cassidy will appear at Convention Center here at 7 tonight.

at guitar-strumming Cassidy acting and singing the part of 16-year-old Keith Partridge on the TV series "The Partridge Family" (described by one viewer as the story of a sort of rock-'n'-rolling Southern California Trapp Family) and it was zonk—the future mothers of America were transfixed.

SINCE THEN, with the help of savvy promoters and his own astute business sense, Cassidy has taken off like a sprite in a windstorm. He has sold some 16,500,000 albums and single records during the past 16 months on the Bell Record label.

None of the songs is anything like the one Maurice Chevalier made famous: "Thank heaven for little girls . . ." but Cassidy might well be singing those lyrics to himself. Without little girls, he would not have made an estimated \$250,000 last year.

Besides his income from TV and recordings, Cassidy also derives a substantial income from concert tours which fill stadiums with ecstatic "Sesame Street" graduates. At the Merriweather Post Pavilion in Washington, D. C., last year, the management hired extra matrons for the ladies rooms to take care of the girls who fainted.

David is the son of actor Jack Cassidy and stepson of Shirley Jones, who plays his mother on TV's "The Partridge Family."

HE IS MODEST but assured as he talks about his career.

Does he think he has arrived? "Oh yes, definitely." But there's a faint note of anxiety in his voice and you know why. It's apparent on his chin, where the stubble of a beard betrays the fact that he can't remain Peter Pan forever. Now 21, his child-man days are numbered. Maybe that's why he's in such a rush to make the most of them.

Within a 24-hour period one recent week, after he flew into New York from Europe (where he had been touring Italy, France and Switzerland in a camper bus—skiing and thinking, he says), Cassidy met with record-company executives, talked with representatives of the music-industry magazine Cashbox, sat down for a few interviews and talked to Garden officials about his upcoming show there. The whirlwind visit ended with Cassidy

and his personal manager, James Flood, placing some luggage and Cassidy's guitar in the trunk of a chauffeur-driven limousine and hurtling through rush-hour traffic to make a flight out of New York's Kennedy Airport for Los Angeles.

ONCE IN THE AIR, Cassidy may have had a restful flight—but it wouldn't have been surprising if the captain, copilot and navigator had taken turns stepping out of the cockpit to get his autograph for their daughters, nieces and perhaps even

the granddaughter of the airline president. That's the kind of thing that happened at CBS studios in Manhattan earlier in the day after Cassidy had taped an interview for Mike Wallace's radio show.

The sophisticated world of electronic journalism turned to jelly as soon as the business at hand was completed, the producer and a half-dozen production assistants crowding around for autographs.

As Cassidy churned out the autographs—"All my love to Kelly, David

Cassidy," "Happy Birthday, Missy, David Cassidy," "Love to Cheryl, David Cassidy"—the young idol was simply making another contribution to the David Cassidy industry, one that rolls out records, posters, pictures and magazines, and answers fan mail that Cassidy estimates ranges from 10,000 to 15,000 letters a week.