

David Cassidy in the Limelight

The Pied Piper of the pre-teen and slightly older set, whose mothers used to scream for Elvis Presley, is a man to be reckoned with on the concert scene . . . We're referring to David Cassidy, of course, who has wriggled his way to sex symboldom by way of records and "The Partridge Family."

We sort of had to keep reminding ourselves that this embodiment of everyone's idea of a modern all-American teenager is now 22 . . . And how does it feel to be in the dreams of all these young female fans?

"I wish I could share the phenomenon with every guy in the world!" exclaimed David. "Girls automatically share it, because they make it possible. Without them, it would be like the tree falling in the forest. But guys get left out, and they shouldn't be, because they need it most."

"I think it's quite beyond the average imagination to approximate the feeling a performer gets when he rushes on stage, and is greeted by shouts and screams of adoration — before he's sung a single note, or so much as said 'Hi — it's good to be here.' To have that kind of attention rained on you — to be loved — without its depending on whether you're in a good or bad mood, whether you wear the right deodorant, or whether or not you squeeze the toothpaste from the middle, is in its own peculiar way, a sort of perfection."

"I wish every guy my age

could experience that unquestioning love. The boys who are the contemporaries of my fans usually feel threatened by me, and no wonder. Teens and pre-teens who are going through those first moments with the opposite sex, who are plagued by all the social pressures — are so vulnerable.

"It wasn't so long ago that I was in that position myself. I had to share their insecurities, and I really wish they could share my stardom. That age needs all the morale-boosting it can get."

"But that's still not the answer. These same guys, grown up, Purple Heart survivors of adolescence and thereafter, 15 years later, are married to a girl who now swoons over Robert Goulet or Tom Jones, and they still feel threatened or at least inadequate."

"If the men in these audiences could understand that what the artist gains is not something taken from them, it would be so much better. I don't want to walk out on stage thinking that for every girlish shout, I'm also taking on the animosity of her boyfriend — it dilutes the whole feeling."

"The artist on stage is so safe. The adoration of his fans is a threat only to himself. His female fans can love him, cry over him, tell their troubles to him — only in their dreams, which is not very satisfying. In real life they turn to that guy who's sitting next to them, and he becomes the knight in shining armor, because he's there, he's touchable, and he can respond. What an opportunity — to be the realization of someone's far-flung dreams! An artist is only the stuff

dreams are made of, and the dreams stay intact only because of the distance that separates him from his fans.

"And up there on stage, with the applause ringing in his ears, the artist is warming to the response of his audience. He knows that if he mops his brow, they'll fight over the sweaty towel. Today. He also knows — at his peril — how fickle an audience can be, and that tomorrow, they may lavish their love on someone else. They adore his unreal self, the self he's created just for them, the self kept alive by their applause."

"But who will be there to applaud his low moods, his splitting headache, his less-than-shining self? An audience will never tell. . ."