

# The man behind David's success

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NEW YORK — While young girls throughout the world bestow David Cassidy with adoration and standing-room-only crowds, he's never quite established himself as a home-town favorite in Los Angeles. It's a situation that not only proves irksome to the 23-year-old idol of teenybopperdom, but it was the reason behind his decision to cancel his Aug. 4 date at the Hollywood Bowl.

"The early ticket returns indicated that David was not going to have anywhere near a sellout crowd, and, rather than wait, he and his manager Ruth Aarons wisely opted to back away," explained Larry Utall, president of Bell Records and the man credited with sowing the seeds of David's success.

When Utall first met David at a press screening heralding the birth of the Partridge Family, he recalls that David was something special.

"I knew this kid had something. There's no name for it and I'm tired of the word 'charisma.' I just knew this kid had IT. And what we did was flaunt it," Utall said.

David's climb to fame followed Utall's own success. The bearded,

kindly record company president, who commutes between offices in London, New York and Los Angeles, started out in life like former President Harry Truman, as a haberdasher. His heart was never in his shop on 14th Street here. It was on Tin Pan Alley, an imaginary thoroughfare traveled by budding songwriters.

"It's hard for me to realize that I ended up with the biggest stars in the field. Last Christmas, Bell had singles in first, second, and fourth place in the Top 30. We had Dawn's 'Knock Three Times,' the Partridge Family's 'Doesn't Somebody Want to Be Wanted,' and the Fifth Dimension's 'One Less Bell.'"

After becoming affiliated with Columbia, Utall was pressed into service as a musical coordinator for "The Partridge Family."

Which brings us up to the present David Cassidy, a reigning monarch appreciative of his following, but fearful of its fickleness. He knows his ardent army of devoted fans defected from Bobby Sherman to him and there are now dozens of "David Cassidy" types in the wings, waiting to snatch his mantle. David's intentions, Utall said, are to retain his present following but to try to capture a more mature audience at the same time.



**David Cassidy and Larry Utall admire one of David's gold records**