

Television Bares Its Magic

Partridge Family Doesn't Sing, Cameras Film Fountain

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MASON, Ohio — Bob Claver, executive producer of "The Partridge Family," was stretched out on a rooftop, shouting to a cameraman two stories below him: "Up, down, over a little, back up again."

Claver had three cameras overlooking a small platform where the six Partridge singers would be entertaining the crowd at King's Island, a theme park here, where the show is filming on location.

While some 30,000 Partridge fans silently and patiently waited for David Cassidy and his fellow TV series regulars to come out and sing, Claver's cameramen were trained on a large dancing fountain behind the platform. Beyond the water was the Eiffel Tower, a replica one-third the size of France's famous structure.

As word spread that the cameras were "almost ready," Suzanne Crough and Brian Forster, youngest members of "The Partridge Family," solemnly made



SHIRLEY JONES DANNY BONADUCE

their way to the platform. At 9 and 12 years of age, respectively, they are hard at work, too young to revel in the crowd's adoration.

Thirteen-year-old Danny Bonaduce, however, sauntered through the cameramen and security guards with all the assurance of a super co-star. Conscious of the eyes of Ohio upon him, he strutted, posed and looked important. It was a funny scene to watch.

Finally, half a dozen sheriff's deputies

escorted David Cassidy and Shirley Jones to the platform. The crowd was surprisingly silent. Adoration of a handsome young singer, it seems, can sometimes be a quiet thing.

Except for an occasional blinding glint as the sun struck Miss Jones' golden hair, "The Partridge Family" mother (and Cassidy's stepmother in real life) stood unnoticed.

Claver, back on the ground, pointed out her importance to the show, which enters its third season Friday, Sept. 15, at 8:30 p. m. on Channel 4.

"I still think Shirley's the star of the show," he said. "If you gave David a show of his own, I don't think it would go. He took off as a star — and they all have their fans — but she holds it all together."

Later, wolfing down a sandwich, Cassidy agreed.

"If anything, she made this show for me. Not only for me, but for everyone else, too. She set the mood, made everyone relax. She's a pro and a fine lady

and she makes it easy to come to work in the morning."

Miss Jones, looking like anything but a mother figure, eagerly discussed the "joys" of "The Partridge Family."

Series Not Creative

"I'm probably one of the few performers who enjoys doing a TV series," she admitted. "I'm a very organized person, and I've done so much in show business that I like the routine of a successful series."

She'll do the series, she said, "until I'm rich enough to retire."

"I get no creative stimulation from it, like I would get from a 'Silent Night, Holy Night' or an 'Elmer Gantry,'" she noted. The Smithton, Pa., native won an Academy Award for the latter, and got an Emmy nomination for "Silent Night."

"The Partridge Family" also earned her an Emmy nomination, but that kind of recognition can't satisfy the lack of creativity. In between shooting schedules for the TV series, Miss Jones is living a

hectic life this summer moving around the country in "The Shirley Jones Show." She appears in Pittsburgh next week at Heinz Hall.

"Perhaps I'm doing it because I don't get to sing as much as I'd like. This season I have three solo shows and a new single, 'Ain't Love Easy?'. I sing it in a love interest show, with Bert Convy as the love interest."

Lamenting a lack of privacy — "I have to put on all kinds of disguises just to go to a Little League game with my sons" — she also admits that "I've been in this business a long time, but my name was never a household word until I took a TV series."

"It's incredible what TV does in terms of national exposure. There's no contest — of all the movies I've made, my name has never been so well known."

As a singer, she also finds the record success — seven gold ones — of "The Partridge Family" somewhat of a phenomena.

"It's a total surprise. Knowing the record business as I do, I would have

said, 'no way'. It's one of the toughest in the world."

Miss Jones and Cassidy are the only two members of the TV show to do their own singing. The remaining voices are dubbed in by others. The recording contract calls for doing all the season's music — 14 record sides — before the new season begins. Each of the 14 recorded songs must be used in the show.

And that must have come as a great surprise to some of the fans awaiting the singing segment of the TV taping at King's Island. After a rehearsal with canned music, the silence thickened as fans waited for the real thing.

It didn't come. "The Partridge Family," TV-style, can't sing.

The fans might have been ever more disappointed had they known that those three cameras weren't even focused on their hero, but rather on the fountain and Eiffel Tower.

Partridge faces would get their camera close-up later that afternoon in another tedious run-through with loudspeaker music.

Oh, the secrets of television!