

Wes Has a Real Golden Touch

By RICHARD TRUBO

LOS ANGELES (PSS)—Everything Wes Farrell touches turns to gold. Gold records, that is.

Farrell is one of the music industry's youngest and most-talented executives. And although he has remained mostly behind the scenes—as a composer, record producer and music publisher—his efforts have accounted for the sales of about 50 million records in the last two years.

"To create well is painful," says Farrell. "It's not an easy process. That's why I work with only the most professional artists. I demand total commitment from the artist to give me everything he has to offer, and likewise I offer him all the energies I have."

As Farrell speaks, he is sitting comfortably in the upstairs office of his Sunset Boulevard home in Beverly Hills. His feet are perched atop a coffee table, which is cluttered with cups of ice water and a foot-high stack of sheet music, letters and memos. To his left is an ebony Mason & Hamlin piano on which he has composed dozens of hit songs (including tunes for David Cassidy and the Partridge Family like "I'll Meet You Halfway" and "Doesn't Somebody Want to be Wanted"). The dozens of gold records that he is responsible for are lining the walls, and others that are yet to be hung are piled in a corner.

"David (Cassidy) is one of the most dedicated singers I've ever worked with," says Farrell, who produces as well as composes many of Cassidy's songs. "Musically, he grew 20 years in his first two years as an artist. He became so interested in what he was doing that he really applied himself toward self-improvement. His range has expanded dramatically."

Farrell deserves much of the credit for pushing Cassidy to the top of the pop music world. When "The Partridge Family" television show was still in the working stages, Larry Uttall, president of Bell Records, brought Wes in to create a musical concept for the show. He wrote the theme song for the program, and one day asked Cassidy if he could sing.

"David said he had done some

singing before," recalls Farrell, "but up to that point, no one had asked him to sing on the show itself. The original plans were that only Shirley Jones would actually do her own singing, and the rest of the voices would be dubbed in. But when I heard what David could do, the entire concept changed."

Farrell is only 32 years old, yet he has wasted little time in compiling a most enviable success record. Born in New York, he dropped out of college and relocated on the West Coast to test his talents in the highly-competitive record industry. And although he had no formal musical training, it wasn't long before he began writing a long string of hits. One of his tunes, "Hang On, Sloopy," became a million-seller twice, in versions by the McCoys and the Ramsey Lewis Trio. The Beatles recorded one of Wes's compositions, "Boys," on their very first album. Soon he was both writing

and producing records for Jay and the Americans, the Everly Brothers, the Cowsills, the Brooklyn Bridge, and Dawn. He also produced some of the music in the film, "Midnight Cowboy."

Earlier this year Farrell started his own record company, Chelsea Records. And although he still composes and produces for artists signed to other labels (like Cassidy), most of his efforts are now directed toward his own artists. The first record released by Chelsea was Wayne Newton's "Daddy, Don't You Walk So Fast," which sold nearly two million copies. His major project now, is marketing Marjoe into a super-recording star.

"The philosophy of Chelsea is to support the careers of all our artists to the extent of guaranteeing them every facility available to advance their careers," says Wes. "We do everything first-class, because we want to

make Chelsea the No. 1 independent operation in the country."

Chelsea already looks like more than a small organization. Farrell has a staff of 46 people on both the West and East Coasts. "No one works for me; they work with me," he says. "We keep a very high level of energy going. We work under a lot of pressure, but we seem to get things done that way."

Farrell himself selects all the songs that his artists will record. He listens to dozens of songs on tape each day, trying to find the perfect ones for each of his singers. Before he takes one of his artists into the studio to record an album, he will have spent upward of 200 hours preparing for the project.

"I look for great songs—nothing less," says Wes. "I really don't care where they come from or who has written them, but they must have hit potential."

At Hollywood's Western Recorders Studio, Farrell worked with former evangelist Marjoe. Farrell appeared completely relaxed on the other side of the glass. Wes had spent so much time in organization and preparation that the session almost took care of itself.

"Wes is successful because he's so dedicated to everything he does," says Mike Melvoin, who has done the arrangements and played keyboards on many of David Cassidy's recording sessions. "Wes works with many studio musicians who are also producers themselves. Yet he has their complete confidence and respect."

Jerry Fine, Chelsea's director of national promotion, says that Farrell "gives the public music that not only entertains them, but that is also a reflection of themselves."

In the final analysis, you couldn't ask for much more.



Star Maker: Wes Farrell (left), credited with creating the super career of David Cassidy, is now concentrating on the recording career of former evangelist Marjoe (right).