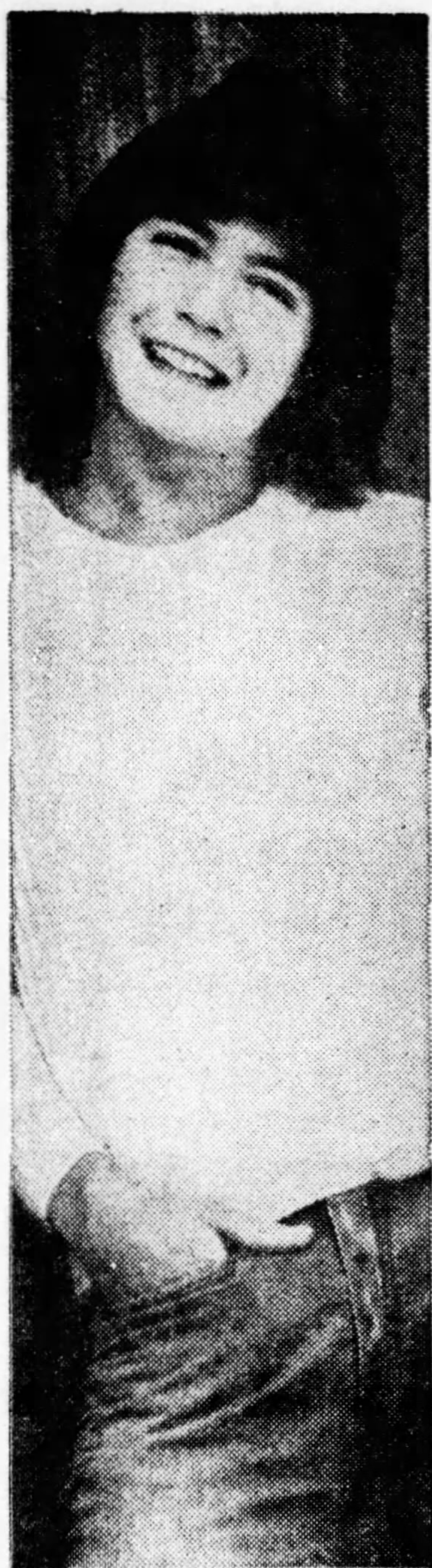




David Cassidy

In Detroit, 24 girls fainted during his renditions of 'Cherish' and 'I Think I Love You.' Rochester fans get their chance next Sunday.

By ROBERTA PLUTZIK

Twenty thousand girls recently filled Madison Square Garden for him; the teen magazines worship his every move. His records, both singles and albums, sell millions.

David Cassidy: 22, five-foot seven inches, 125 pounds of electric which, if divided up among his fans, would give each a paltry souvenir.

At this point, you couldn't buy David Cassidy for a billion dollars. You can see him in concert — he will appear in Rochester, at 3 p.m. next Sunday, as he gyrates, possibly in a \$500 white crepe jump suit slit to the navel and decorated with bells, beads, fringe and sequins around the waist.

But according to his manager, Ruth Aarons, "David is the inherent consummate entertainer. He has an instinctive command of audiences. The way he leaps out and bounces around the stage, his little yellings of 'I love you' — it's exciting, and theatrically effective. He projects a joyful, affirmative sexual appeal. He does not infer destruction. Like Sinatra in the Forties, he has that touchable, vulnerable, clean attraction."

Cassidy, the youthful lead in "The Partridge Family" television family series which also stars his real-life stepmother, Shirley Jones, has been riding the crest of teen-bopper admiration. His closest competitor is singer Donny Osmond, about eight years younger.

Their concerts have something in common: an element of frenzy that rips through the audience at the performer's slightest appealing gesture. It is the style and magnetism which began with Sinatra, continued with Presley and the Beatles.

In Detroit, 24 girls fainted during David's renditions of such AM hits as "I Think I Love You" and "Cherish."

In all this adulation, there exists a young man who, barely two years ago, thought he wanted a stage career. The son of entertainer Jack Cassidy, David studied elocution with

Richard Burton's mentor, Philip Burton. He won a small part in Allan Sherman's short-lived Broadway play, "The Fig Leaves Are Falling."

"When 'Fig Leaves' folded like a tent," manager Aarons recalled, "I told David, 'Look, you've got two ways to go: you can stay here in New York for seven years and learn to act. Or you can come back to Los Angeles and be a star.'"

"Honestly," David Cassidy now says, "my goal was not to be a star."

But, it seems, he let it happen.

David hated the "Partridge Family" script when first it was introduced to him. He told his manager: "You gotta be kidding with this." Ruth Aarons wasn't, and David Cassidy decided to reconsider his hasty decision.

He loves, he insists, what's happened. "It's high going out on that stage," he says of his nationwide personal appearances. "You look around and it's all there for you, people loving you like that. My friends are there with me. I'm doing what I love to do most, singing, and I'm singing for people who would rather have me sing than anybody else in the world."

"There's one song I do, 'I Woke Up in Love This Morning' and I find a little place where I can sort of point to them. And they each think I mean THEM, and I do."

David's stepmother, Shirley Jones, compares his performances to a "revival meeting, the way he excites the audience, then calms them down."

Rolling Stone magazine says that "On stage this quiet, mild guy" is "transformed into a glistening white superstar." The magazine, also reports David's offstage personality is not always as self-confident, convincing and magnetic as it is in concert.

After more than a year of teen magazine constant commentary on his life, he says he really would like to read some intelligent commentary on himself. But behind the shining armor of his television smile, David has been

quoted as saying he is out for himself. "I read in one fan magazine that I was very self-centered. And I am. I work for me, 18 hours a day. It's my gig. So I don't have time to get a point of view."

His lack of viewpoint includes politics — "I don't listen to the news or read newspapers. I don't know what's going on in this world, or why I should vote for George McGovern or Richard Nixon. I don't have enough time."

Although David Cassidy prowled the streets in San Francisco's Haight Ashbury district during the 1967 drug scene, although he spent three months recovering from mononucleosis afterward, David says he doesn't care whether his fans take drugs or not.

"What's right for me," David has said, "is not necessarily right for them."

When he's not filming "The Partridge Family," cutting records or on tour, Cassidy lives in a huge Encino, California, house. He plays guitar, listens and tries to copy his favorite group, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young and has begun writing his own songs.

According to recent reports, he has no girl friend at present.

According to other reports, Cassidy has a faint touch of frustration about his appearance on "The Partridge Family." But executive producer, Bob Claver, says David's the perfect star: "He's willing to play the fool. Every once in a while Shirley Jones, who plays his mother, will object to something in the script. She'll say, 'A mother would not do this'. But David, he never objects."

David probably will make about \$250,000 this year. His financial adviser is buying him oil stock and possibly land in Hawaii. Everybody in the Cassidy entourage has his fingers crossed.

"This whole thing with David is . . . a calculated risk. It could not work out. But it will. And there is no way David will wind up a broke rock star," says his publicity man, Jim Flood.