

# David Cassidy's Moving From Idol to Entertainer

By MARILYN BECK

(c)1972, Marilyn Beck

David Cassidy has a master plan for his future: the transition from teenybopper idol to main line entertainment star.

"I've already begun during this past six months to make my music more sophisticated and I'm happy that I'm starting to draw some older people to my shows now."

But what will this do to his role as the eldest teen-age son on "The Partridge Family" TV series? How can the series fit in with the more sophisticated plan for his future?

"I'll be leaving the series," he says simply. "I can't stay forever. I'm growing up, and though everyone involved with the show acts as if they're afraid to discuss the fact, it is happening, you know."

It is indeed. David Cassidy still sports a Prince Valiant hairdo these days, but that is about as far as he wants his "white knight" image to extend. Consequently, "Suddenly, I'm Peck's Bad Boy." The casual shrug and attempt at a smile can't hide the fact that he is upset over some people's inability to realize that he is a 22-year-old adult, not the teen-age TV character he portrays.

"I think they expect me to sit around all day and just chew bubblegum. I've got them all shook up. Why? Because I'm acting like I'm for real, because I use a dirty word occasionally, trying for some human honesty. Heck, I even go to the john occasionally. That's a living, breathing me behind all that publicity."

What has shaken up some of those involved with Cassidy's career is a recent Rolling Stone article which quotes him on his experiences with drugs and quotes girls on their experiences with him.

Cassidy grinned, recalling one young woman's description of his prowess in bed. "I thought that was flattering. In fact, I didn't think the over-all article was as terrible as some people made out. It had a sensationalistic approach, but it was generally factual."

He did take exception to one aspect — his attitude on narcotics. "They made it sound like I condoned drug usage. I don't! Sure, I experimented around when I was in high school — just like everyone else — but I'd never advocate the use of any drugs to anyone. It's something you have to make up your own mind about. For me personally, I did it and I'm glad — now I know it's not where I want to be."

Where he does want to be is at the top of the show business heap for a long time, and he



David Cassidy

realizes that to stay there he's got to broaden himself and his appeal.

"It's going to be rough. I'm prepared for the worst — a lot of people aren't really ready to accept the change. But I'm confident I will overcome," he says confidently.

He is also confident that, by his own definition, he is the hottest entertainer in the business today. "Elvis Presley," he says as if explaining Over-The-Counter stock listings, "he can sell-out any hall. He can always pull a crowd. But his last 10-12 records have been stiff. I mean, they've gone nowhere!"

He continues. "Me, I've cut a dozen records in the last 20 months — and 11 of them have turned out to be over-a-million best-sellers! My total record sales since 'The Partridge Family' started: 18 million!"

David Cassidy knows the figures and quotes them. Moreover, he is no cardboard cutout to be propped up on a stage or before cameras while others in the background manipulate, program and mastermind his career. His manager was with us during this interview, but Cassidy did the talking, supplied some of the more impressive details of his concert tours.

"We sold out in Madison Square Garden three-and-a-half days after the tickets went on sale. In the Houston Astrodome in March we drew a crowd of 56,723 — to two matinees the same day. We also broke attendance records at the Garden State Art Center in New Jersey."

He nodded, "I'm on the road practically every weekend."

And so goes David Cassidy, No. 1 Commodity of the Year. But he knows it can't go on forever — not unless he can make the transition from

teenybopper idol to mainline entertainer.

"It has to die down, it happens to everyone: Elvis, John Lennon, Bobby Sherman. The youngsters desert you after awhile, move on to someone else. How long you last depends on how heavy your talent is. I've been lucky. I've had two and a half good years. Bobby Sherman was lucky, too, lasting as long as he did, considering the tools he had to work with. I'm not putting him down, but I think he'd be the first to tell you he never was a singer."

He is grateful to the Screen Gems' "Partridge Family" ABC series for the fame it has brought him, but feels it is becoming something of an albatross.

"You get stamped in a mold that becomes difficult to cast

off. People see you playing a 16-year-old and it's hard for them realize you're 22 and mature."

Interestingly enough, Cassidy hasn't had the problem of females confusing him with the squeaky-clean Partridge son he portrays on TV. The many lovely young ladies waiting outside his hotel rooms are only too eager to accept him as a grown-up.

He is well aware that there are those who date celebrities only to be able to later scream rape, but, he says, "I try not to think about it. I dig someone who's settled, usually older than I am, who isn't that liable to do a lot of talking later."

But he is doing plenty of talking for and about himself these days. He figures it is about time.