

David Is No Fan of the Fans' David

By BARBARA LEWIS

LOS ANGELES (PSS)—David Cassidy sat curled up in an easy chair in the living room of his simple ranch house in "The Valley," as that section of this sprawling city is known here. He was wearing cutoff jeans and apologized for his appearance.

"I've been painting," he said as I stared around at the walls to observe his works of art.

"No," he apologized again, "I've been painting the woodwork and trying to get the house in shape."

And that's how David Cassidy, idol to millions of squealing young stars around the world, spends his time when he's not working. And he's been not working a lot lately, a state of affairs self-imposed.

Altering Course

David resents allegation of a changing image, but that apparently was an underlying factor behind his rest. There are no fans more fickle than those who devote their distant adoration to stars like Cassidy. An idol lesser than David would have been self-satisfied. But the youthful-looking performer, taking a backward glance at his career, says there were many wrong moves made in what was meant to be in his behalf. Now he's aiming at an altered course.

With a little prodding he reflects that he would not be a David Cassidy fan, if in fact he were not David Cassidy. Very deftly he swivels past questions that would clarify his statement.

"Let's just say that I was given material to do that I would not have selected for myself."

And then with the polish of someone accustomed to giving appropriate answers he adds, "I am of course grateful to all those who helped me and worked with me over the years. I feel, however, that I must now select other material and I am doing some of my own writing. I have a new producer, Rick Jarrard, and a new single, 'Daydream,' from the John Sebastian catalogue.

David also blames his would-be dislike of David on articles that have been printed about him; particularly in fan magazines.

"They were always writing things about me that were not true. They wanted interviews and when I didn't do them they would write about me anyway," he said ruefully. "At any rate, I would not like the person that they were writing about."

He's Press-Shy

It's not terribly surprising that David is press-shy, and he readily admits that he has not done any interviews for longer than he can remember for certain.

He's also rather inaccessible. For example, let me reconstruct the procedure I went through before David pressed the buzzer which swung open the electronically-controlled gates that protect him from the fans that would camp on his doorstep if they could get that close.

I had done an interview in London with Beatle Paul McCartney in which he explained why he was so anxious to keep on working although he could retire on his earnings and his laurels.

"I don't want to be someone who was" McCartney

said. "David Cassidy is now. People here are screaming for David Cassidy. They don't pass him on the street and say, 'you know who he used to be.'"

McCartney also went on to say in reference to Cassidy, "Kids are only interested in what's now — not what was. Adults are interested in what was. I don't want to stay away from the public and say that I was a Beatle. David Cassidy say, 'I AM DAVID CASSIDY.' And right now, he has it all over me."

I thought that was pretty impressive. Paul McCartney who has singles and albums, past and present, on all types of music charts, says that Cassidy has it all over him. I thought Cassidy and his fickle fans would like to know about it as well.

I returned from London and called Cassidy's record company in New York. Bell Records was delighted to hear what McCartney thought of Cassidy, but he doesn't do interviews, they said. Try calling his manager, Ruth Aarons, they suggested.

Not only did I call Ruth Aarons, I flew to California and called. She was never in and never returned the calls. Her secretary was also impressed with McCartney's endorsement, but reiterated that Cassidy does not do interviews.

I called the public relations office of ABC Television, the network on which "The Partridge Family" appears. No problem, they said, they would call Ruth Aarons. Again no response from Ms. Aarons. I tried

reaching David through producer Wes Farrell and later learned that David no longer considers Farrell his producer.

In the course of my travels I mentioned the problems in reaching David and well-meaning associates said they had contacts with those who had contacts. Nothing.

Luck at the Bistro

As luck will have it, I was having dinner one evening at the Bistro, a chic, expensive Beverly Hills restaurant frequented by Hollywood's elite. Bob Elliott of Screen Gems, which produces "The Partridge Family," was there and I repeated to him the efforts I had exerted to reach Cassidy.

"Do you want to meet him, he's here," Elliott said, departing without waiting for an answer. He returned a moment later with Cassidy, who was elegantly dressed in a brown velvet suit with a ruffled shirt.

"I've been wanting to meet you," David said, extending his hand. "I heard about the McCartney interview and I'd love to know more."

He repeated his dislike of interviews but suggested nonetheless that I come to his home. He had hired a new publicist (Bob Levinson) and said he would have him make the arrangements.

So, there we were sitting in his living room, talking about McCartney for whom he has the greatest admiration. At one time, he said, it had been suggested to him that McCartney might do some things for him.

He was hesitant to impose, he said and furthermore, while he was enormously flattered by McCartney's accolades, he thought it would be most presumptuous to capitalize on them.

Last Year With 'Partridge'

This is his last year with The Partridge Family. His contract calls for him to do 24 more segments and he is fulfilling his obligation. With an assertion of loyalty and pragmatism, David explains that "The Partridge Family" was responsible for his huge success, but he feels it has run its course with him.

"They won't replace me. After all, you can't suddenly say this is Keith, when he doesn't even look like the Keith I've been playing for years. I don't know what they'll do. I'll either go away to school or maybe they'll kill me off in an automobile accident, or something."

David, himself, never went away to school. He spent one semester at Los Angeles Community College, not far from his home, and then left. I had not planned on asking David about his entry into show business. That type of interview is done only with a newcomer. Background on stars are either generally known or printed in "bios." But David volunteered the information himself.

"I went to New York and got a job in the mail room of a textile house while I studied acting and singing with David Craig. I got a part in 'Fig Leaves Are Falling,' playing Dorothy Loudon and Barry

Nelson's son and quit my job in the mail room."

He did some television spots on programs like "Ironside," and then got the role as Keith in "The Partridge Family," which brings up to the present.

What about the future for David Cassidy? The immediate future is taken up with completing the final segment of the "Partridge" series and then he's off on a world-wide concert tour.

"I'd like to do a film if the situation arises," he says with the caution of someone who has a deal in the works but believes it's premature to discuss it.

Will there be a new David Cassidy?

"No. I'm not trying to create a new David Cassidy. I'm just letting the old one do what he wanted to. I have no regrets. I've had a fantastic three or four years. I am very soon approaching a place in the road where my paths are going to fork. I just want to do something different, not drastically different. I had no control over my image.

"The fans mags wrote about me what they wanted and even now they have in mind to make it seem there is a new David Cassidy. I don't read them. I'd only eat my guts out."

One of his four cats (he also has several dogs) jumped into his lap and purred. As David stroked him gently he said, "I'm not hostile. I don't bear any resentment. There has been so much written about me that I can't un-write. Me, the person I am now, will be a little more cautious."



"I'm not trying to create a new David Cassidy, I'm just letting the old one do what he wanted to," the super star of "The Partridge Family" reveals in an at-home rap.