

David Cassidy, 25 And Rich, Works Again

By JERRY PARKER

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New York
IN THE EARLY 1970s, millions of American girls put away their Barbie dolls and took up David Cassidy.

They bought his records, attended his concerts, read David Cassidy comic books, chewed David Cassidy bubble gum, put David Cassidy posters on their bedroom walls and took their peanut butter sandwiches to school in David Cassidy lunch boxes.

Thanks largely to his sometimes hysterical prepubescent following, David Cassidy, at the age of 21, was earning more money in a single night than most people make in years.

He sold 5.5 million copies of his biggest single, "I Think I Love You." One afternoon at Houston, he filled 56,000 seats in the Astrodome twice.

His career brought him a Corvette, a mansion in Encino, Calif., and an income in excess of \$250,000 a year. Of course, he hated it. A year and a half ago, he decided that he could not stand it another minute.

"I walked away from it," he said. "I stopped touring, stopped doing concerts, stopped doing the merchandising, stopped doing interviews, stopped recording.

"What I really stopped doing," he says, "was feeding a machine that was creating an image that was manufactured, fabricated, false."

HE IS A MELLOWER 25 years old now, and though he says that he is rich enough not to have to work again, he has recently emerged from self-imposed oblivion to resume his musical career.

RCA has just released his album, the first that Cassidy has made in two years, and he has embarked on an international tour to plug it.

As he sprawled in a corner of his suite at the Plaza Hotel the other day, Cassidy's choirboy looks seemed to have taken on a touch more strength, a little maturity; though he still retains

the essential delicate prettiness that young girls might envy as much as lust after.

He looked very much the Kid Mogul, with his white Keds propped up on the coffee table and his dark glasses firmly in place while he talked business into a telephone cradled against his cheek.

CASSIDY HAS occupied himself with a number of things since he dropped from public view. There are the horses that he keeps on a ranch two and a half hours out of Los Angeles, his new house in Ha-

waii, his music, and, he says, "a couple of nervous breakdowns.

Defining his terms, he says that, no, he was not hospitalized for emotional problems and never sank into an alcoholic or drug-induced quagmire. He did seek psychotherapy and he did, he swears, take to his bedroom and refuse to come out for three months.

"I took a long time re-evaluating what I wanted to do as an artist," he says. "I took a long time reassessing my relationship with friends I had lost because of devoting so much time to a ca-

reer that was . . . fabricated."

Although he once told a reporter, "Listen, if they're going to buy lunch boxes they might as well buy David Cassidy lunch boxes," he came to hate the thought of himself as a commodity being peddled to children. And he came to hate the music that he was singing to them.

CASSIDY AND his friend, Bruce Johnston, co-produced the new album and wrote several of its songs. Called "The Higher They Climb, (The Harder They Fall)," the record is a kind of tongue-in-cheek chronicle of the rise and fall of a teen idol.

"It's like putting a cover on the last five years of my life," Cassidy said. "I lived the personification of the American dream. People no longer want to become movie stars," he said, scratching his nose with his thumb as he talked, as he does quiet a lot. People want to become rock and roll stars."

The seven gold record albums that he did for Bell Records notwithstanding, Cassidy call his new effort "the first album I've made that's representative of me as an artist."

South African Show Is Hit In London

EVEN BEFORE the curtain goes up the drums can be heard, and they throb through repeat curtain calls as if reluctant to fall silent.

Yet the drums are only one element, and an underplayed one at that, in "Kwa Zulu," the most sophisticated and exciting tribal entertainment South Africa has yet sent to the London stage.

Such entertainments have been coming here for a long time. Josh Makhene, this production's joint choreographer, assistant director and one of its stars, was here 15 years ago in one of them.

But in terms of musical sophistication, production skill and sheer enjoyment, none of

the parade of black South African troupes since then has been within the range of this Johannesburg product, which opened late in July.

London's critics were appropriately enthusiastic.

"I can only report that the entertainment on offer must qualify as probably the most compulsively enjoyable musical show in London," wrote Michael Coveney in the Financial Times.

"Dwa Zulu" is a series of

tribal ceremonies strung together on a flimsy narrative. Its only musical instruments are five sets of brilliantly pounded drums plus the voices of the 27 other cast members.

"The topless maidens, rolling their smooth limbs and swaying seductive black hips, are enough to persuade even the most jaded soul to forget, temporarily at least, all our local tribal problems such as inflation," wrote Keith Nurse in the Daily Telegraph.

THE TERRIFIC EXCITEMENT IS

ROLLERBALL