

David Cassidy Quit Being a False Image

By JERRY PARKER
Gannett News Service

In the early 1970s, millions of American girls put away their Barbie dolls and took up David Cassidy.

They watched him on "The Partridge Family," 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 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 singel, "I Think I Love You." One afternoon in Houston, he filled 50,000 seats in the Astrodome twice.

His career brought him a Corvette, a mansion in Encino, and an income in excess of \$250,000 a year. 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 the television show, stopped doing interview and stopped recording.

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

He is a mellower 25 years old now and though he says 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 Cassidy has made in two years, and he has embarked on an international tour to plug it.

Cassidy has occupied himself with a number of things since he



DAVID CASSIDY
... recording star

dropped from public view. There are the horses he keeps on a ranch two and a half hours out of Los Angeles, his new house in Hawaii, 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 lone time re-evaluating what I wanted to do as an artist," he says. "I looked over my relationship with friends I had lost because of devoting so much time to a career that was... fabricated."

"My record company didn't care about me as an artist," he says, "and didn't understand my saying, 'I don't want to record that stuff any more.' 'It's the same stuff,' they said. 'You're making money, why now?' "

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 says. "They want to become rock and roll stars."

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