

Shirley Jones proud of children, has her own revitalized career

By ANDEE BECK

HOLLYWOOD — When rock 'n' roll sapling Shaun Cassidy bowed at L.A.'s Greek Theatre this summer, 4,000 prepubescent girls swooned as he shed his zoot suit to expose skintight satin shirt and slacks. With every suggestive lyric and every bat of Cassidy's puppy eyes, the not-yet-nubile nymphs tossed satin caps on stage, waved "I love Shaun" pennants and shouted messages of undying adoration.

Shirley Jones was in the audience, too, heartily applauding along with the sold-out crowd, and, during intermission, answered requests to sign autographs as "Shaun's mother."

How did that make the accomplished, Oscar-winning actress feel? "Obviously, I'm very proud. It's funny, my career is revitalized every time one of my sons goes into show business. I think it's wonderful. How could I not be proud?"

During a luncheon meeting, she's just as eager to discuss the careers of stepson David Cassidy and 19-year-old Shaun as she is her own.

Not that much can't be said of Shirley's professional accomplishments. The actress (whose impressive credits include "Oklahoma!", "Carousel," "Elmer Gantry," "The Partridge Family" series and the TV films "Winner Take All" and "Silent Night, Lonely Night") is thrilled that she's being offered more assignments now than ever before.

She's delighted to be breaking out of an image that's tied her to sweet-mother roles in the past several years. And she's pleased with her portrayal of Constance Dobson in the first part of Universal's two-segment "Evening in Byzantium" that airs later this month.

"All of that is wonderful. But the only thing that's really important to me is my home and family," says the mother of Shaun, 16-year-old Patrick, 12-year-old Ryan (by the late Jack Cassidy, from whom she was

divorced in 1975) — and bride of actor-manager Marty Ingels.

"In fact, Shaun looks at his career the way I do — and always have: with a grain of salt. Instead of show business being a way of life, it's a job. After all, that's the only way to look at it."

Not that Jones has always felt so relaxed about her business. A former Miss Pittsburgh, she was raised in a Pennsylvania hamlet of 800 as the only child of the late Jones Beer owner, Paul Jones, and housewife-mother Marjorie. Shirley had always wanted to be an actress.

At age 18, she left home and the Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera Company, and headed for New York — where almost immediately she landed a part in "South Pacific" on Broadway. Within a year, she was cast in a starring role in her first film, "Oklahoma!"

Much like the attention that 30 years later was to be heaped upon Shirley's stepson David Cassidy — and which currently keeps Shaun in the public eye — magazines and newspapers were eager to write the "true story" of Hollywood's newest young star, Shirley Jones.

"It was a time," she says with traces of bitterness, "when studios told a performer how to dress and act in public. A time when, for the benefit of the press, studios set up escorts for actresses to be seen with at parties. All that was very disturbing to me — I didn't like playing games. The press wasn't very happy about that."

"When it came to interviews, you must realize I was 19, a small-town girl. I hadn't done anything professionally to talk about with the press. What was I going to tell them? I was excited about being in the business, but I'd never been married or come close to death. It was an uninteresting, normal, happy life I'd led, and that got the press upset. I was just simple and

straight. So they called me vacuous."

She stares at her seafood salad, and for a moment is pensive. "Then, of course, my life became very interesting," she continues matter-of-factly, "when I married Jack Cassidy at age 21. He was a volatile, exciting man." And though theirs was a rocky 19-year marriage, she states, "I like that in a man. And I've always lived through my husbands. I need to. I need a home base, a family."

Partly because of her devotion to family, and also due to her many "sweet mother" portrayals, she's come to acquire the screen image as the best mother in the world. "Of course, everybody wants to be something they're not," says Shirley.

"If I had my way, I'd like to be thought of as a very sophisticated lady about town, a party-giver, much

like my 'Evening in Byzantium' character. Unfortunately, I don't look the type. I'm not Ava Gardner."

That she was offered the sophisticated role in "Byzantium" (the same type of portrayal that won her a 1960 Oscar for "Elmer Gantry") is an indication, she points out, "that people are again allowing me to do what I do best: act. Maybe the industry decided it's time for me to do more. Maybe my getting more mature has helped. Growing older seems to be taking away the little-girl and mother image, which is marvelous."

"Actually, everything is marvelous right now. I'm not worried about tomorrow. Success or failure does not break my heart. The only thing that matters is my family, and right now, I'm enjoying every single moment of my life."

Shirley Jones

Versatile Shirley Jones has played many roles in her career. In the left photos, from top to bottom, she is with Glenn Ford in "Evening in Byzantium," with Burt Lancaster in "Elmer Gantry," with Henry Fonda and James Stewart in "Cheyenne Social Club" and with David Cassidy in "The Partridge Family." In the right photos she appears with Gordon MacRae in "Oklahoma," with Robert Preston in "The Music Man," with Ford in "The Courtship of Eddie's Father" and with MacRae in "Carousel."



STATION	LOCATION	ON-AIR	CABLE
KTVU & KGSC	OAKLAND, CA		5
KVIE & KXTV	SACRAMENTO, CA		6
KTXL	SACRAMENTO, CA		7
KTVN	RENO, NEVADA	(2)	9
KOLO	RENO, NEVADA	(6)	10
KCRA	SACRAMENTO, CA		11
KCRL	RENO, NEVADA	(4)	12
KOVR	STOCKTON, CA		13
HBO	HOME BOX OFFICE		3

EVENING

- 8:00
 (2) (9) CBS NEWS
 (4) (11) (12) NBC NEWS
 (5) STAR TREK 'Court Martial' (60 mins.)
 (6) REBOP
 (7) EMERGENCY ONE
 (8) (10) (13) ABC NEWS
 8:30
 (2) (4) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12) NEWS
 (3) OVER EASY Host: ...

Stars: Barbra Streisand, Michael Sarrazin. An eager and aggressive young Brooklyn housewife who would do anything to help put her cabdriver husband through college ends up taking a most improbable route to a most improbable life of crime. (90 mins.)
 10:00
 (2) (9) BARNABY JONES Betty meets an old college

(11) TOMORROW Host: Tom Snyder. Guest: Joseph Kraft, Washington-based syndicated political columnist. (60 mins.)
 1:30
 (7) MOVIE (DRAMA)***½ "Penny Serenade" 1941 Cary Grant, Irene Dunne. A couple adopts a child after their baby dies in an attempt to find happiness. (2 hrs., 30 mins.)

(7) LOVE AMERICAN STYLE
 (8) (10) RYAN'S HOPE
 (13) CROSS WITS

AFTERNOON

12:00
 (2) (9) PHIL DONAHUE SHOW Topic: The Hazards