

David Cassidy discovers the world is a candy store

By George Maksian

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NEW YORK— For almost half a decade, he was king of the pop scene, the prince charming of the bubblegum set. He had the teenyboppers tearing their hair in concert halls throughout the country. Then, zap, he decided to leave his TV series (*The Partridge Family*) and the show skidded to oblivion.

We're talking about David Cassidy, who's back in the limelight after an absence of a little over 3½ years — not as a singer, however, but as a cop in the new NBC series, *David Cassidy — Man Undercover*, which made its bow Nov. 2 for a 13-week run (Thursdays). Cassidy stars in the show as Dan Shay, a young officer in a special undercover unit of a large metropolitan police department.

The program originally was telecast as a two-hour *Police Story* last season and registered so well (Cassidy was nominated for an Emmy) that it went to a series. Lately, however, the series hasn't been doing that well in the ratings, a condition, Cassidy says, will soon change with a better earlier time slot.

What has Cassidy been doing since departing *The Partridge Family*, which delighted its viewers with its stories about a family of children who became a professional rock group?

"Well, I traveled around the world a couple of times. I got married (to Kay Lenz, the actress), and I got reacquainted with a lot of my friends that I didn't have time for before. I'm like a kid with a \$100 bill who's been let loose in a candy store," he said.

"It's not so much for the sake of buying things, but for the sheer freedom of it. It's what I want to do. I've been having a terrific time. Before I stopped working, I was unreachable. I was in a vacuum. Then came the time that I had to reassess my life. If I wanted to work again or keep on singing.

"It was a strange position to be in," Cassidy went on. "There I was at the top of the ladder. No where else to go. It was not so much for the fans, but more the madness of the experience; the fact that I had become so reclusive. If I had spent one more day at it, it would have been too anti-climactic. I wanted to leave it before it left me, if you know what I mean."

Cassidy is a little older (he's 28 now) and obviously a little wiser. He still has that boyish look and easy-going personality. He looks back on his career as a bizarre happening, which, he says, usually ends up being more negative than positive.

"I've heard so many stories of teen stars ending up broke, dying, or into drugs. 'That's not for me. Luckily, I've had some good memories from it.'"

Cassidy was asked about his half brother, Shaun



Though he relishes freedom from teen-star status, ratings for David Cassidy's TV series are not as strong as had been hoped.

Cassidy, now considered one of the top rock stars in the country, who seemed to have followed in Cassidy's footsteps. "Shaun is different," said the elder Cassidy. "I never wanted to be a rock star. It just happened. I was in a series and the rest just happened.

"With Shaun, he always wanted to be a singer. He enjoys what he's doing, shaking his behind on the stage, hearing the youngsters scream. I did the same thing, I admit. But I didn't like it. I always wanted to be an actor.

"It was what my father (the late actor-singer Jack Cassidy) always wanted for me. He hated my being a rock singer. Dad always told me 'talent will survive. Do it if it's there.' I honestly believe that, whether it's in this business or any other."

Cassidy is now working on a special project involving John Paul Getty III, the Getty heir who lost his ear to kidnapers in Italy. "I've bought the screenrights to his story from Elliot Mintz. It's based on 12 hours of tapes. It's a bizarre story and I see it as a good film.