

Lunch: Pop icon David Cassidy rekindles career

By Ryan Murphy
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David Cassidy is a pop-culture pioneer. As the star of the smash TV show "The Partridge Family," which ran from 1970 to 1974, the bell-bottom-wearing Cassidy ushered in the era of the lunch-box icon. Over one million metal meal totes stamped with Cassidy's pimple-free face were sold in the early '70s, along with millions of David dolls and coloring books.

And then there were those records. As Keith, the lead singer of the Partridge clan, which also featured the background vocals of Shirley Jones and Danny Bonaduce and the zesty tambourine skills of Susan Dey, Cassidy was, in his heyday, a one-man version of the New Kids on the Block.

AS A SOLO artist, he had several gold records, including "I Think I Love You," which sold six million copies. The music literally died in May 1974, when, at the height of his career, a 14-year-old British fan had a heart attack and died at a concert. "I wanted to close the book on all the madness," Cassidy says of his sudden retirement.

After years of reclusion, Cassidy moved to London. "I didn't fancy myself doing Love Boat guest-shots," he says, "so I did some theater and worked my a-- off to get some credibility."

He has two new movies coming out — including "Spirit of '76," a bicentennial/disco spoof — not to mention a new album, the appropriately titled "David Cassidy." "It's the best album I've ever heard! It rocks!" boasts Cassidy. And what's the second-best? "The Chipmunks' first album."

Q. To you, what is the most exciting thing about your comeback?

A. People are listening to the songs. People are coming up to me and saying, "I never thought I'd buy a David Cassidy record. I know "The Partridge Family" was really successful, but frankly I hated the old stuff you did and I love this." When you can turn it around — how great! When people come up to me, I wish I had a camera to capture the looks on their faces. They light up — it's like seeing an old friend.



File photo

DAVID CASSIDY was a forgotten star in the '80s, but has high goals for this decade.

Q. Tell the truth — did you and Susan Dey ever have anything going on the set of "The Partridge Family?"

A. We had a lot going, but I was always on the road, she was always going out with older men, so we had to settle for being really close friends. She's like a sister. And I'm thrilled for her success on "L.A. Law."

Q. You're renowned for your tremendous hair style. What are your grooming secrets to get that feathered look?

A. It's weird! I don't know why people make such a fuss over my hair, but they do. My hair tips for guys are try and hold onto it! I've had so many different looks. I've had it short, shaved, everything. Now it's longer again. I don't pay too much attention to it, really. If I'm just hanging out, I wash it every other day. When it gets longer I blow dry it only because it bothers me to put clothes on and have wet hair hanging on your collar.

Q. In the '70s, millions of girls plastered their bedrooms with life-size posters of you. Who were the people you had posted on your walls when you were growing up?

A. Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, B.B. King and Tina Turner.