

David Cassidy's on a mission

By TOM POPSON
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Several months ago, David Cassidy, teen idol emeritus and the man who played Keith Partridge on "The Partridge Family" TV series, was listening to a radio in Los Angeles when he heard his name mentioned.

Cassidy's radio was tuned to what he describes as an "outrageous" talk/music show on station KLOS. It happened to be Cassidy's birthday, and what he heard, he recalls, was the show's two hosts' seizing the occasion to send some digs his way.

He remembers hearing the pair say something like: "I wonder what David's doing now. You can only imagine he's got a couple of babes on each arm, and he's probably drinking champagne."

During his 20-some years in music, television, theater and film, the 40-year-old Cassidy has been on the receiving end of wild adulation, his perky good looks having prompted paroxysms of squeals and sighs from young female Partridge fans in the early '70s.

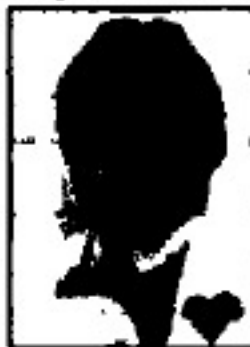
He also has taken his knocks, having suffered, among other indignities, the barbs of music critics who dismissed his Partridge-era singing efforts as low-merit bubblegum pop.

Cassidy, in short, has pretty much experienced the spectrum of reaction during his career, and it would have been easy enough simply to pass over the latest remarks he had heard on the radio.

Instead, impelled, perhaps, by a trace of impishness, Cassidy placed a phone call to the radio show's hosts.

"Of course, the switchboard didn't believe it was me," Cassidy recalls, "but I finally got through to the producer and got on the show."

Adopting a scraggly, weatherbeaten voice, Cassidy told the show's hosts: "Hey, y'know, things ain't been



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goin' too well for me, so I ain't got any chicks on my arms. Actually, I'm livin' out of your garbage can."

Surprised by Cassidy's call and his willingness to be a little irreverent about himself, the hosts subsequently invited Cassidy down to their show and asked him to bring along some demo tapes of songs he had been writing. Cassidy recalls spending some four hours on the air.

"The response was incredible," Cassidy says. "There were people out in the parking lot. Amazing. By the end of the show, I had three separate offers from record companies."

Thus was launched the 1990 return of David Cassidy. Cassidy hooked up with Enigma Records, and a new album, "David Cassidy," has just been released, Cassidy's first American LP in 12 years.

Besides the album and a video for the first single, "Lyla to Myself," there have been other recent signs of a career revving up, including Cassidy blurbs in the pages of *People* and *Rolling Stone* magazines and Cassidy himself, who looks about three days older than he did in his Keith Partridge days, serving as a presenter (along with "Partridge Family" co-star Susan Dey) at the recent MTV Video Awards.

Coming down the pike, says Cassidy, are two film roles:

In "Spirit of '76," a satirical look at the '70s that Cassidy reports will also feature Rob Reiner and Moon Zappa, he plays a "futuristic, high-tech grease monkey" who travels via homemade time machine from 2176 to 1976.

In "Instant Karma," Cassidy is cast, in his words, as "one of the great egocentric would-be television stars." The comedy portrayal, Cassidy says, "took a little bit of a number of actors I had worked with and put them together to create this monster."

For the moment, though, Cassidy's album is the vehicle carrying him once again into the public spotlight.