David Cassidy shedding 'Partidge Family' baggage

By Jim Farber New York Daily News

NEW YORK — He registers under his own name now.

When David Cassidy checks into the Mayflower Hotel, he needs no aliases and wants none. In fact, the whole point of his trip here — along with his trek to 16 other cities in as many days — is to convince radio people and the press that after 20 years of living in the shadow of "The Partridge Family's" velveteen bell-bottoms, he is no longer a human dimple.

Slumping into a chair overlooking Central Park, he says, "One forgets that one isn't 19

anymore."

Looking at him, one could easily forget that, too. Though Cassidy turned 40 this year, he still twinkles. A few extra lines may mar his wide, eager face, but his smiles still flash and his shag still shines.

On this trip down the possible comeback trail, bolstered by the appearance next month of his first U.S. album release in 12 years, Cassidy finally seems willing to accept his old self. "Ninety per cent of what I did back then, I look back and embrace," he says.

Of course, Cassidy himself claims that at the time he also had conflicting feelings about the show. When recording such chirpy Partridge Family hits as "I Think I Love You," the singer maintains: "I was going

to Hendrix concerts. I was playing in blues bands."

Cassidy says he didn't straighten out until late in his

teens, at which time he took up acting, eventually landing the part as the weeny-bop idol of a generation. The first time he got a chance to act as anything other than Keith Partridge in public was his infamous 1972 Rolling Stone interview, which came complete with confessions of drug sprees and near-naked photos. "It was the first time people heard my voice," he says.

And the first time they saw

he had pubic hair.

After doing regional theater, some TV, and making one or two successful albums in England, Cassidy's first U.S. deal in more than a decade came as a fluke. When two wisecracking deejays started making fun of him on L.A.'s KLOS last year, Cassidy (who happened to be listening) decided to call up and get in on the joke.

The deejays invited him down, and Cassidy spent some four hours on the air, during which time he took the opportunity to play three demos he'd been working on. "By the end of the four hours, I had three separate offers" from record

companies, Cassidy boasts.

Since that time, Cassidy has been sending up his ersatz psychedelic past at politically savvy events — the International Rock Awards, The New Music Seminar, and just last week, on MTV's Video-Music

Awards.

Enough time has elapsed, he feels, and anyway, the world seems more forgiving of former teen idols these days.

Just look at last year's shock comeback of Donny Osmond.