

## IN DEPTH

## David Cassidy

**Former teen idol puts the Partridge Family behind him, but keeps on rocking**

By Dan Bennett  
Staff Writer

There was a time when nobody laughed at David Cassidy, save those who would deny the talent of the man who epitomized early '70s teen rock.

Then came the ultra-cool years, when everybody laughed at David Cassidy, though often with fond memories. Children who grew up worshipping him became adults, and admitted with sheepish pride they were former Partridge Family freaks, then accepted the oncoming ridicule with mild-mannered grace.

Now, nobody is laughing at Cassidy again.

"I'm experiencing the genuine interest of an audience for the first time in several years," Cassidy said in a recent interview with Preview. "It feels good because it's genuine. People honestly care about me, they want to see me do well. It's hard to complain about people having those feelings for you."

Cassidy is in the middle of a successful

tour, one that brings him to Sound FX in Kearny Mesa (560-8022) on Saturday, and the Coach House in San Juan Capistrano (714-496-8927) on Nov. 8.

Cassidy is singing favorites from the past 20 years, some with new arrangements. Without a new album (save the one he released last year) but with almost 20 records to choose from, Cassidy is a man, his guitar and his rock 'n' roll band, free of the teen idol baggage that once followed him like a lost dog.

"If people have a preconception of me, it won't be met by what they see on stage," Cassidy said. "My band really rocks. I've spent many years trying to show people I'm not that kid on television, and I never was. During the last year, I think that message has come through to people."

Who was that "kid" on television? Cassidy was the epitome of the Teen Beat pinup boy, the cute, talented and oh-so-sonic man/child who played the eager musician Keith Partridge on "The Partridge Family," a situation comedy that ruled the airwaves for four years during the late '60s and early '70s.

The son of stage and film actors Jack Cassidy and Evelyn Ward, Cassidy would make an overwhelming mark on pop music with the release of "I Think I Love You," the song that launched a million letters, a million tears from adoring female fans.

Cassidy was on the cover of most major magazines, sold out arenas around the world, and became the impetus for the biggest fan club of all time, surpassing in volume those of Elvis Presley and the Beatles.

More hits followed, and Cassidy became indelibly linked to teen stardom, often a blessing to some, more often a curse to others, and it seems a bit of both to Cassidy.

"There was a time when people wouldn't let go of the image, and it caused me problems," said Cassidy, now 41. "I went through the period when I was faced with nothing but questions and comments about my past. But I'm not hooked to that image anymore. People have accepted me for what I am today, and I'm grateful."

There were down times for Cassidy, a failed marriage, long periods without work, self-doubt, the usual curses of early fame. But Cassidy has weathered those, and has come out smiling and proud. In the massive exposure the singer has received since releasing his self-titled album on the now-defunct Enigma Records last year, he has consistently showed a sense of humor in the face of snickering questions.

"You need to have a sense of humor about any work you do," Cassidy said. "I'm certainly not embar-



assed about the time I spent on the show or the image I had. I was way too successful at it to be embarrassed. I don't have to apologize to anybody, man. Whenever you do something that is loved that much, you should be proud."

Today, Cassidy says his audience wants David to be David, and that brings a new approach. Married again and the father of a young son, Cassidy brings maturation to his new songs. He is working on songs for a new album he says he hopes to release in the spring.

"If the work is good enough, and I enjoy it, and that shows, the music will get out to people," Cassidy said. "I'm enjoying the process of playing and singing now more than I ever have in my life."

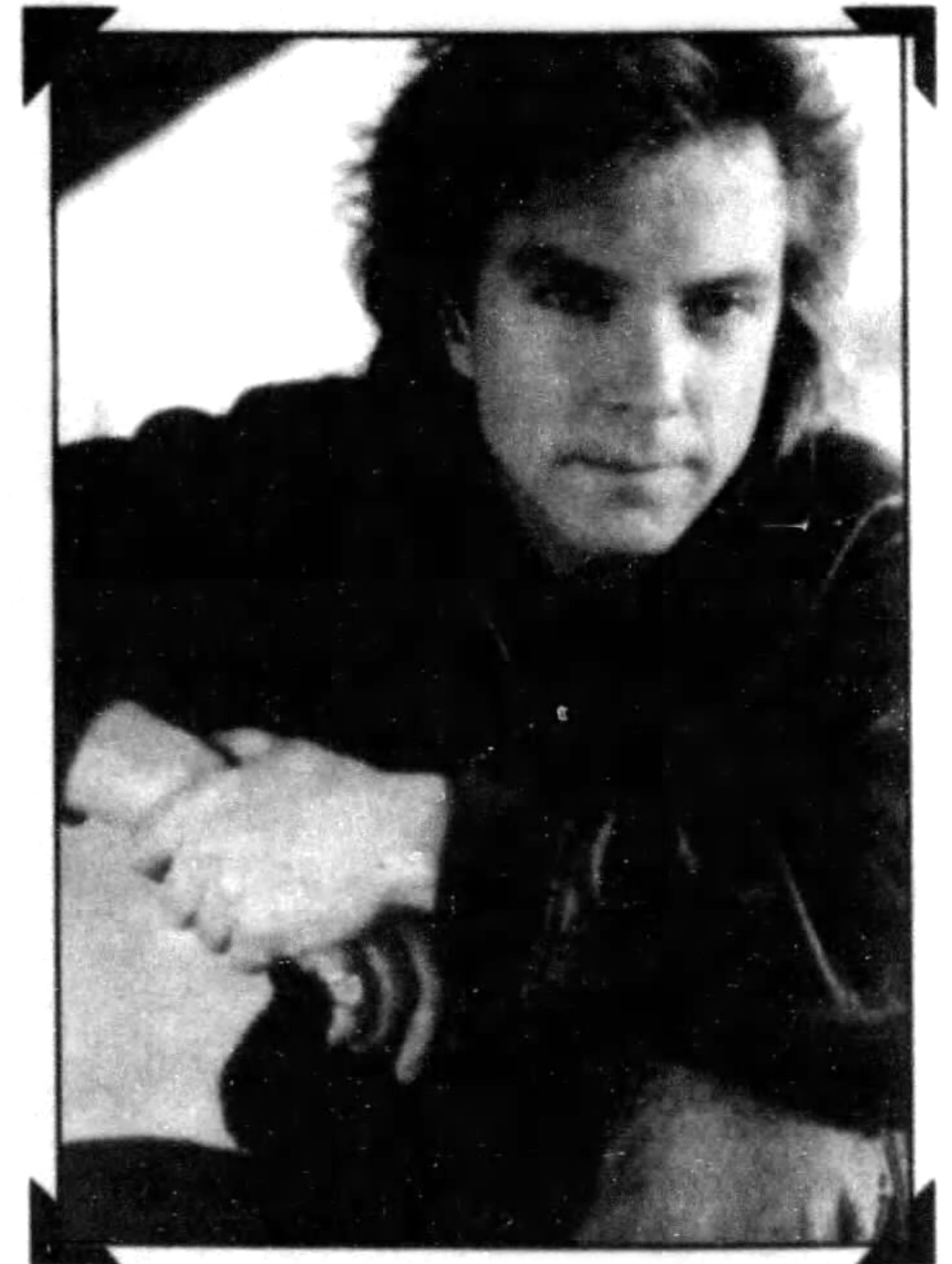
Though the smug have dismissed the works of Cassidy as kiddie pop of an era that never should have been, some music critics consider his early work lasting and effective, a true monitor of a time when pop music stuck tight and fast to emotional lyric and formidable hook.

Cassidy himself was always regarded as a guitar player of merit by those in the industry, and while Keith Partridge was making the little girls swoon, David Cassidy could often be found jamming in a studio with musicians' musicians such as Larry Knechtel, Jim Gordon and Hal Blaine. Cassidy has often listed Jimi Hendrix and Cream as two of his biggest influences.

"I grew up in the '60s, and was heavily influenced by that sound," Cassidy said. "People were making records that sounded brilliant back then, and they did that without technology to fall back on. There was no such thing as sampling. The songs had to pay off, and they did back then."

Not that Cassidy isn't hip to what's hot. He appreciates the diversity in today's formats, and tries to incorporate those in his music.

"When I toured the first time, everything I did was live," he said. "I never even dreamed of going out and lip-syncing, and I



David Cassidy brings his new style of rock to San Diego on Saturday.

would never think of it now. I grew up wanting to sing and sound like the Beatles, and that original vision has stuck with me."

Cassidy said he will continue mixing music with the acting career he has cultivated to a small degree of success. If Cassidy sounds like a man reborn, he also sounds like a man who knows what he wants.

"I left the spotlight while I was at the top, and that doesn't really mean anything to anybody but me," he said. "Nobody cares that I left society and the business for an extended period when I had it all, and that's fine. I just know I didn't end up in some tragic lounge somewhere. I am eternally grateful for everything that's happened to me, and especially the music. I have a sound check in 15 minutes, and I'm telling you the truth, I can't wait to get there and start playing."



David Cassidy first hit stardom as Keith Partridge on the TV sitcom 'The Partridge Family.'