

IDOL TEARS

For years, no one would take David Cassidy seriously. But finally, that's changing.

By JIM WASHBURN

"Some people call me a teen-age idol, but that's not really me, I guess they've got no way of knowing how lonesome I can be."

Those words were sung in the 1950s by Ricky Nelson, the first television-spawned teen idol, and they have applied ever since. For all the easy fortune of cathode tube Adonises, their stardom always seems to be bittersweet and short-lived, with a stigma that lingers.

"It seemed whenever I'd read my name, it would be David 'former teen idol sex symbol' Cassidy," says former teen idol sex symbol David Cassidy. "I used to think, 'Well, I guess I'm going to have to do something more significant in my life, like David 'convicted felon' Cassidy or something,' anything that would erase that convenient label."

Fortunately, the onetime Partridge Family heartthrob hasn't had to resort to a life of crime. Rather, he has been rescued by the Willy Russell musical "Blood Brothers," in which Cassidy appeared for 10 months on Broadway. He reprises his role at the Orange County Performing Arts Center beginning Tuesday.

In "Blood Brothers," which Cassidy describes as more a play with music than a traditional musical, Petula Clark plays a working-class mother of twins. Unable to care for the children she already has, she gives one twin (played on Broadway by Cassidy's half-brother Shaun; played here by Tif Luckenbill) away to a wealthy woman, while the other, Mickey—played by Cassidy—grows up in poverty. Unaware of their relationship, the fraternal twins later meet and become friends until they fall in love with the same girl.

"Playing this guy's life, it's never ceased to be interesting and exciting and the reason why 25 years ago I decided as a teen-ager to become an actor."

DAVID CASSIDY

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What

"Blood Brothers," a musical by Willy Russell.

When

Tuesday, Feb. 7, through Feb. 10 at 8 p.m.; Feb. 11 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Feb. 12 at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Where

The Orange County Performing Arts Center, 600 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa.

Whereabouts

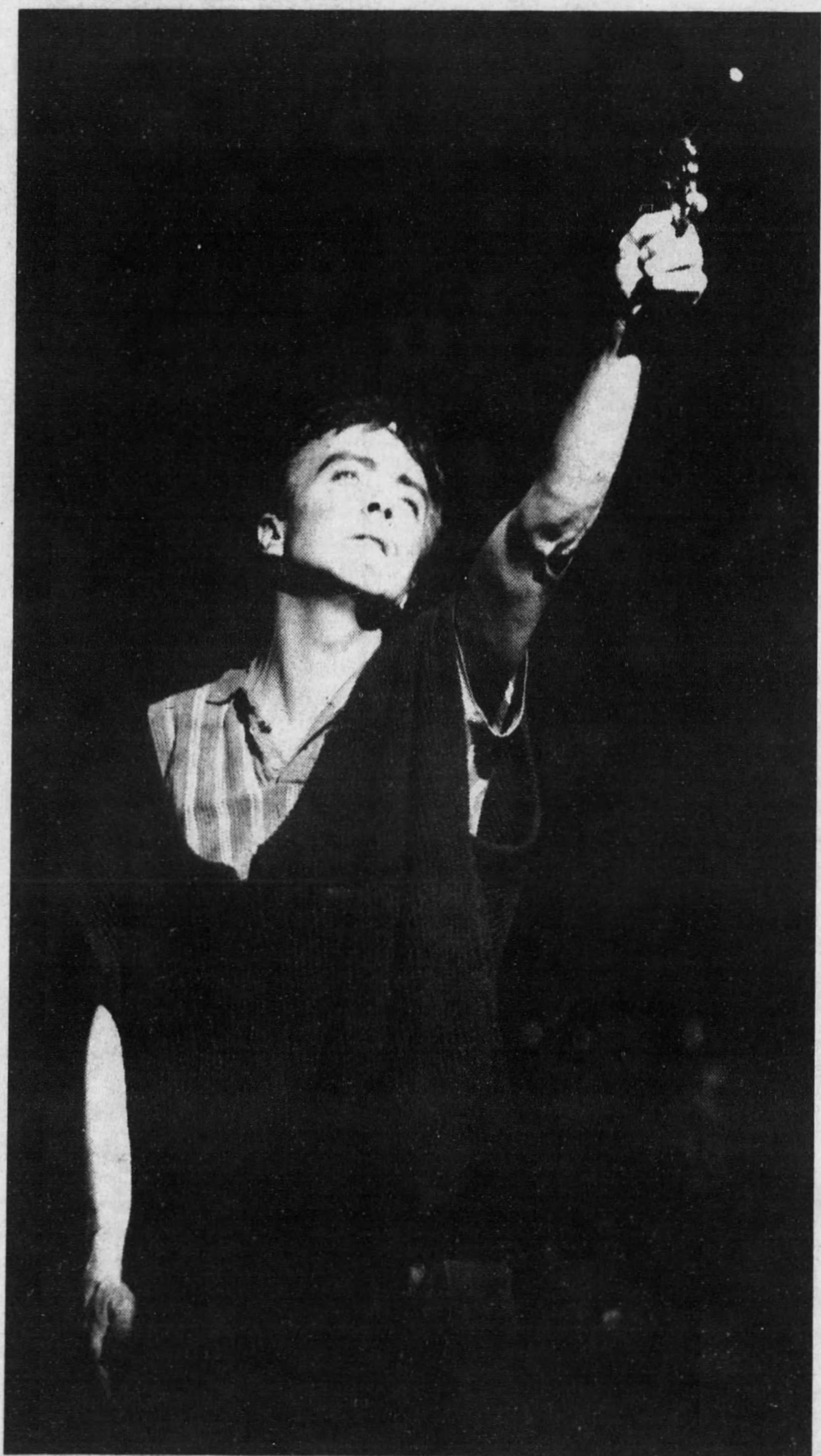
San Diego (405) Freeway to Bristol Street exit; go north. Turn right on Town Center Drive and park in one of the lots.

Wherewithal

\$19 to \$47.

Where to call

(714) 556-2787.



Photos by JOAN MARCUS

Thanks to "Blood Brothers," David Cassidy's prospects are looking up.

Co-Stars Are In Tune With Each Other

In the script to "Blood Brothers," David Cassidy's character Mickey bonds with his unknown twin. In their Broadway run and on the road, it is Cassidy and British co-star Petula Clark who have formed a bond of friendship, the two say.

It was the unlikely casting of the two one-time pop stars that inched "Blood Brothers" into the money and new acclaim on Broadway in 1993. Adds Cassidy, "sharing it with someone you become friends with is a wonderful life experience, more than just a career experience."

Though both had acted before

this, each was only familiar with the other's musical work, with Clark—who starred in "Finian's Rainbow" and "Goodbye, Mr. Chips"—claiming to have never seen a "Partridge Family" episode. She didn't have any apprehensions about working with a former teen idol, saying she's not inclined to prejudge people. "But still, I had no idea how very good he would be," she said.

"First of all, he came into the producer's office in London for the first reading of the script with the perfect Liverpool accent, and mine certainly wasn't

ready. And he was incredible at the reading. I mean, we were all in tears. I'm thinking, 'What is this?' And it just went on from there. He does give a most wonderful performance in this, and to be perfectly honest, I wasn't ready for that."

Cassidy was similarly struck at that first reading, saying, "I was certainly aware of her vocal talent; that's part of what we all heard on the radio in the '60s. I didn't realize she was as accomplished and good an actress as she is. She bowled me over the way she just left into it."

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David Cassidy and Petula Clark are friends as well as co-stars.