

'Blood Brothers' Features Petula Clark, David Cassidy at OCPAC

by MIKE RUSSELL

Willy Russell's English musical "Blood Brothers" will open for eight performances only Feb. 7-12 at Performing Arts Center. It stars the ever-green Petula Clark and the ever-popular David Cassidy.

Russell, writer of "Educating Rita" and "Shirley Valentine," both plays turned into films, wrote the script and also composed the music. The story centers around the lives of twin brothers who were separated almost at birth because their mother was unable to support them both. One twin stayed with his mother, Mrs. Johnson (Clark), and the other

goes to live with the wealthy Mrs. Lyons (Priscilla Quimby). By an odd coincidence, the twins meet in later life and, not knowing they are blood brothers, become friends. The rather unusual story opens on a funeral scene and returns to the same scene at the climax. The drama unfolds as the story of their lives is told.

In a phone interview last week from his hotel room in Denver, Mark McGrath, 41, who plays the narrator, describes his part as being many faceted. He is a conduit with the audience. His character, he reveals, is

an ominous one which reflects the consciences of Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Lyons who each raise one of the twins, one in poverty and the other in a wealthy household.

McGrath says his part is almost like Chi Guevara's in "Evita." "I am the only person who speaks directly with the audience," he notes. "I reflect the innermost thoughts of the two women." McGrath says the characters speak in a Liverpool dialect except for the narrator who speaks in an American dialect. "Blood Brothers" is in two acts, has one intermission, and is

two hours and 40 minutes in length.

Petula Clark made her debut in "Blood Brothers" last year. Her numerous hit recordings include "A Sign of the Times," "This Is My Song," "Don't Sleep on the Subway," and her two Grammy-winning classics "I Know A Place," and perhaps her best-known hit, "Downtown." Clark is second only to Diana Ross as the most successful female recording star in England, with a giant 27 hits.

David Cassidy played Mickey, the underprivileged twin, for 10 months on Broadway before joining the touring company. His previous hits in-

clude the title role in Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" and the musical "Time" in London's West End. He is best known for having starred in the TV series "The Partridge Family." His most famous hit recording was "I Think I Love You."

"Blood Brothers" premiered on

London's West End in 1983. It won a prize as one of Britain's best musicals. It was again opened on the West End and was a big box office success. It is now in its sixth year at London's Phoenix Theatre. Ticket information for "Blood Brothers" can be obtained by calling 556-ARTS.