

David Cassidy reinvents himself with 'Old Trick New Dog'

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It's a funny thing about songs: One tune can stick in your head as a kid and stay there. You bop

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to it for a few months, then forget it, only to have it come crashing back into your memory a few decades later.

David Cassidy and Tony Romeo know a thing or two about anthems. *Sing Me*, which Romeo wrote for Cassidy in

1973, is wistful proof of that. And so is *I Think I Love You*, the anthem they created in 1970. Romeo penned the words, Cassidy sang it on *The Partridge Family*, and 5 million kids across the planet snapped it up.

Now in the '90s, the song has a new life. Hugh Grant stammered out the title in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. Levi's used it as a musical backdrop for its Emmy-nominated jeans commercial. In *Scream 2*, Less Than Jake covers it, while the original figures prominently in the romantic comedy *I Think I Do*.

Enter *Old Trick New Dog*, the 10th solo album of Cassidy's

30-year career and the first release on his own Slamajama imprint. It's available now through Cassidy's Web site (www.davidcassidy.com).

The old trick is the first single, a remake of *I Think I Love You*. And the new dog is Cassidy himself. New because, at 48, he's in the midst of a career renaissance that began in 1990 with his Top 30 hit *Lyin' to Myself*.

"I wanted to pay homage to it," Cassidy says of *I Think*. "But I also wanted to sing it as a guy 25 years later. I couldn't address it with an organic, original

approach. I had to find a new way of doing it."

So Cassidy turned the unhip



Cassidy

original on its ear, transforming the new version into a slower, electronic-edged slice of urbanized pop, built over a slinky groove and powered by percolating pianos, rumbling bass and seductive background vocals by former Prince protege Elisa Fiorillo.

It's cool, but marred by a syn-

thesized mimic of the original's lame "Ba ba-ba ba-ba ba-ba" intro.

Cassidy pumps new blood into two more old tricks. *I Can Feel Your Heartbeat* gets aired out, funkied up and twisted into a bass-heavy confection, and *I Woke Up in Love This Morning* is retooled as a hypnotic dance jam.

But nostalgia only goes so far, even if it is overhauled for the '90s. The best moments on *Old Trick* come from the new tunes. Cassidy picks up where 1992's rock- and r&b-influenced *Didn't You Used to Be* set left off, but veers into smoother,

funkier territory.

On *Peace, Love and Happiness*, one of album's best tracks, he slips into an intoxicatingly loose gospel-soul groove, then slows things down for *Sheltered in Your Arms*, a heartbreaking ballad he co-wrote with John Pagano and Luther Vandross collaborator Reed Vertelney.

Let Her Go, a jammin' meditation on the dark side of infidelity that Cassidy wrote with Christopher Walker, is another killer.

"(This album) has the reflections of a guy who has been through hell and back," Cassidy says.

"It's about a guy who has come to terms with who he is in life as well as his music. I think it reveals a lot about me as a romanticist, an optimist and a survivor." □

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