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■ **On the cover:** Danny Bonaduce (left) and David Cassidy are two of the original *Partridge Family* stars who participate in *In Search of the Partridge Family*, a seven-episode reality series on VH1.

■ **Program details:** Stations reserve the right to make last-minute programming changes. See daily TV page inside Accent for late changes.

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# VH1 turns 'Partridge Family' into reality series

■ **In Search of the Partridge Family:** Series premiere, 9-10 p.m. today, VH1 +848637 [Repeated 11 p.m.-midnight +241853]

They sang sappy songs like *I Think I Love You*. They danced really funny like everyone did back in the '70s. The rode around in a psychedelic school bus that should've been left for scrap metal a long time ago.



**Kevin D. Thompson**  
Television

Of course, I'm talking about *The Partridge Family*, the wildly successful ABC comedy about a close-knit family that hit the big time in the music business. The show, which aired for four years (1970-

1974), was a true phenomenon.

*I Think I Love You*, for instance, sold 4 million copies as well as albums. And David Cassidy, who played band leader Keith Partridge, became a hero of the subteen set and enjoyed immense success as a solo act.

Thanks in large part to the ridiculous success of *American Idol*, VH1 is taking *The Partridge Family* out of mothballs and bringing it back as a reality series.

You're not really surprised, are you?

*In Search of the Partridge Family* is a seven-episode series that will cast an updated version of the hit sitcom family.

VH1 traveled to Orlando, New York, Minneapolis and Los Angeles looking for people who resemble, act and sing like pinup-cute Keith, quiet/cool Laurie (Susan Dey), smart-alecky Danny (Danny Bonaduce) and level-headed Shirley Partridge (Shirley Jones).

Eight finalists for each character will be flown to Los Angeles, where they will compete in weekly episodes for each role. All of the finalists will sing Partridge songs like *Come On, Get Happy* as well act in scenes from the original show.

Todd Newton will host with Cassidy, Bonaduce and Jones along for the ride.

"Everybody probably has some recollection that comes to mind (of *The Partridge Family*), whether it's that trippy bus or your secret crush on David or those strange cutaways to Chris who seemed to be playing the drums, but not really," says Brian Graden, president of entertainment for VH1 and MTV.

Cassidy admits he was initially cool to the idea, but decided to do it to make sure it was done right.

"(The show) was in its time, in its day, in its moment, perfect for what it was," he says. "And I wanted to maintain that integrity. With the evolution of what entertainment is now, it was inevitable it was going to end up being done by people who didn't love and care for it and what it meant. The reason I'm involved in this is not because they're paying me (a lot) of money, which is obvious. The truth of the matter is I'm doing it because I love it and I want it to be good."

The always funny Bonaduce is known as much for his role on *The Partridge Family* as he is for the many missteps in his personal life.

Would he consider *In Search of the Partridge Family* a healthy thing for a child actor to do?

"People have a tendency to say, 'Well, it's my child's dream.' Well, it's my child's dream to become a cop, but I don't let him play with guns," he says. "It has nothing to do with your child's dream. It has to do with parenting skills. I don't think the fact that (*Diff'rent Strokes* star) Todd Bridges and I ran amok should really endanger the reputation of an entire industry. If being a child star is so carcinogenic, somebody needs to tell Jodie Foster and Ron Howard to just lay down because their days are numbered."

Bonaduce doesn't stop there. He's on a roll.

"Let me just say, in all honesty and all sincerity, when I went to rehab, I was the only ex-child star there," he says. "But there were nine dentists. And nobody said, 'Do you think you're here today because you're an ex-child dentist?' So I really think one thing has nothing to do with the other. I think it's a fine business and I'm proud to be in it."

And to be on *In Search of the Partridge Family*.

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