

David Cassidy still finds a loving audience

By Lauren Bishop

lbishop@enquirer.com

It's hard to think of David Cassidy without seeing an image of the teen idol he was in the '70s, with his dark brown feathered hair, boyish good looks and a voice that would send fans into frenzies as they packed stadiums to see him.

Although the "Partridge Family" star still performs—including at a show at the Newport Syndicate tonight—Cassidy is, in many ways, a typical baby boomer who calls himself a member of the "sandwich generation." The 60-year-old, who is married to songwriter Sue Shifrin-Cassidy, is caring for his aging mother, Evelyn Ward, while being a parent to his two children: 24-year-old actress Katie Cassidy ("Gossip Girl") and 19-year-old musician Beau Cassidy.

David Cassidy spent much of a recent phone interview from his South Florida home talking about his children and the guidance he's trying to give them, based on lessons he learned in the spotlight. He tells them to follow their dreams, he says, and to not take rejection personally.

"You have to understand that most of the population will not get you," he says he tells his son, a singer/songwriter and guitarist. "But if 1 percent of the population really get you and love you and love what you do and support you, you will be highly successful."

Plenty of people still love David Cassidy, enough to keep him touring off and on. He's had the same band for the past 10 years, and he prefers playing smaller venues like the Syndicate now. Cassidy also has bred and raised



Provided / JAG Entertainment

David Cassidy still tours, off and on, and performs tonight at the Newport Syndicate. Next up is "Celebrity Apprentice."

thoroughbred horses since the mid-70s and likes performing in Kentucky so his friends in that business can see him play.

"Even if I could sell out Houston Astrodome and Madison Square Garden again, I wouldn't want to play those places again," Cassidy says. "It's not about the money for me now. For me and my fans, it's a celebration."

Cassidy says he clearly remembers playing the Cincinnati Gardens in 1971, one of his first concerts. His band's equipment and costumes failed to show up by show time, so he nervously went onstage in a T-shirt and jeans and started playing Buffalo Springfield and Beatles covers when all the

thousands of young fans in the crowd wanted to hear was "I Think I Love You."

The road manager came onstage, grabbed the microphone from his hand and announced, to deafening cheers, that Cassidy would be back onstage with the band in 10 minutes.

Cassidy sees a bit of himself in today's young pop stars such as Justin Bieber, but he says that teen idol hysteria was more intense in his day. With limited ability to record TV shows, no Internet and no cell phones, fans had fewer opportunities to see big stars. So when they did, chaos ensued.

"When I would be out, just being a human being, or trying, it was beyond what I

could even describe to you," he says. "Traffic would stop. People would get out of their cars. When I played Madison Square Garden, the fans turned over five limousines. And I was already gone in the trunk of a Toyota."

Cassidy's fans' next opportunity to see him is 9 p.m. March 6 on NBC. He's on this season of Donald Trump's "Celebrity Apprentice," along with Richard Hatch, Dionne Warwick, Star Jones, Meatloaf, Gary Busey, Lisa Rinna, LaToya Jackson and ex-baseball player Jose Canseco.

Initially hesitant to do the TV show, Cassidy agreed largely because of the chance to support a charity of his choice. He chose one related to research on Alzheimer's and dementia because his mother has severe dementia. He's not allowed to talk more about the show but did say it was "a highly challenging experience."

More TV shows may be in his future, Cassidy says, but his family comes first.

"It's really a matter for me of finding the work that I love to do," he says. "I love to work. It's just a question of what you have to sacrifice for it."

If you go

What: David Cassidy

When: 7:30 p.m. today (with 6 p.m. dinner buffet).

Where: Newport Syndicate, 18 E. Fifth St., Newport.

Cost: \$40-\$60.

Information:

www.rwatickets.com, 859-781-7700