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When a rock group's singer comes down with mumps, who substitutes?

MOM, THE ROCKSTER, ALSO DRIVES A CRAZY-COLORED BUS

Walk onto the set of *The Partridge Family* and you know you haven't stumbled onto *The Lawrence Welk Show* by mistake. The place is jumping with kids. "And they're all mine," laughed Shirley Jones.

In real life, the talented singer-actress has three sons. On TV, her brood numbers five of the liveliest young people to swing onto the home screen since the Monkees. Who all the other kids were on the set that day remains a mystery. They may have been birds of a feather, but they weren't Partridges.

As viewers of this program are aware, the Partridge family is *not* just like the one next door — unless you live beside a family of rocksters who tour the country in an old school bus painted psychedelic colors.

The bus' color scheme is one of the less wild aspects of the show. The series is built around a rock group that, of all things, spans the generation gap.

When their lead singer comes down with mumps, who jumps into the breach? Who else but Mother Partridge, of course. And when the family cuts its first record it naturally becomes a hit. Isn't that the way with every rock group you've ever heard of?

Lead singer of *The Partridge Family* is David Cassidy. He was standing near a drinking fountain as we walked into the huge sound studio at the Columbia Ranch in Burbank, Calif. "I'm putting on my fish act," he said between gulps of water.

So far, David and Shirley are the only Partridges whose voices are actually heard on the show. "Because of the kind of music it is and the type of show it is, I'm singing lead voice and Shirley is singing harmony," David explained. "Other professionals are singing back-up."

He started singing when he was three. Now David Cassidy has joined *The Partridge Family*



We found seats near a lighted set showing the interior of the Partridge family's house. Had he been singing long? He smiled. "I started singing when I was three," David said. "I was always in choir. I also played drums and have been playing guitar since I was about 11. I play guitar on the show.

"In high school I played in the band. Some of our music was so bad you couldn't dance to it. I've always been involved with music. For a while my life just revolved around jamming with people. I never had any formal training in either guitar or drum. Two close friends of mine were like virtuosos, so I picked up what I know from them."

David's parents were divorced when he was young. His father, Jack Cassidy, is married to Shirley Jones. "I lived with my mother," said David. "She was a dancer. From the time I was five I worked with her. I didn't really get involved in acting until I was 17. I heard they were having auditions for a Los Angeles Theatre company for a new musical they were doing. I sang and danced in that."

We asked David what he thought of today's pop music. "There are some really fantastic groups," he said. "I sort of lean more toward jazz than rock, though it depends on my mood. I can really get behind some rock groups who aren't doing just '1-2-3 rock' stuff. I like the Beatles." David writes music but hasn't yet written anything for *The Partridge Family*. The show features an original song each week.

David at this point was called away to do a brief scene. When he returned, he flopped into his chair. "I'm exhausted," he said. "Mainly my legs are tired. I've been standing a lot."

David describes himself as a loner. "In my free

time I just do anything I feel like doing, usually things by myself or with one other person. I used to play basketball, but I haven't played for several years.

"During most of my schooling I was just average. When I wanted to put my head in it I was pretty good — but it took me until about my senior year to put my head in it. I went to public high school until the middle of the 11th grade. At one point I almost dropped out. I got in with the wrong group of people. I felt like I was just a number. I started cutting classes and doing absolutely nothing. I was rotting away. My mother was very concerned. In all the years I lived with her that was the only year we didn't get along. I was constantly hurting her, though I didn't want to — but I couldn't help myself."

Laurie Partridge is played by 18-year-old Susan Dey, who is beginning her acting career in this series. Susan was born in Illinois, but she has lived for many years in Mount Kisco, N. Y. Her father

Susan Dey: From modeling to music





Troupers on-the-road: Danny Bonaduce, Suzanne Crough, Susan Dey, Jeremy Gelbwaks

is an editor of a newspaper in New Rochelle, N. Y.

"I love doing this series," Susan said enthusiastically. "It's just fantastic. I've never done anything like this before. I've done modeling, but that's so different. Then you just stand there and the camera clicks."

Susan was graduated from the Fox Lane School in Bedford, N. Y., last June. She spent the last semester taking lessons by mail. "I started modeling when I was 16," she said. "I modeled during the summers of 1968 and 1969. In November of 1969 I came out here to screen test for this series. After I got the part I went back to New York and modeled. I lived in the home of my agent, who also has a daughter, so they were like a second family to me."

Susan's own family was always very close. "My brother is 16 and my little sister is nine. They both live at home. My older sister is 20 and is getting married, so she's leaving us. My family was always just great. I found my independence when I began

modeling in New York. My parents have always been concerned about my welfare, but I don't resent it. When I think of home, or am asked my home address, I really have a home to think about. I didn't always get my own way, but I was always free to express my opinions. My parents have always been 100 per cent in back of me.

"I first went into drama when I was in the 11th grade — and just loved it. Anything I knew when I came to California to do the pilot for this series I learned from my high school drama coach. When I was in New York City I modeled during the day, and took drama and voice lessons at night. On weekends I just collapsed.

"Before I got involved with drama I studied most of the time and baby-sat a lot. I dated one guy from the time I was 15 until I was 17. When he went off to college we decided to break up."

Shirley Jones, who plays the mother of the Partridge brood, has appeared in a number of movies, including *Oklahoma*, *Carousel*, *Elmer Gantry*, and *The Music Man*. Does she really drive that crazy-colored Partridge bus, we asked. She was seated in front of a big make-up mirror while a hairdresser fixed her hair. "You bet," she said with a smile. "I've driven that bus all through Las Vegas and Hollywood!

"If someone had told me two years ago I'd be singing rock 'n' roll, I would never have believed them."

"Do you like the music?" we asked cautiously.

Her face lit up. "Like it? I love it. We think we've got some real hits!"

