

powerful when there is a mix of male and female physical characteristics and of masculine and feminine behavioural traits (Threadgold and Cranny-Francis, 1996, 230).

Richard's ability as an actor was further developed in *Expresso Bongo*, an adaptation of a Wolf Mankowitz 1958 musical, and a film that evoked the rapacious world of Tin Pan Alley. It marked a cinematic pop landmark and his performance as the aptly named Bongo Herbert demonstrated his ability for both characterisation and humour. Other films followed, most notably *The Young Ones* (1961), *Summer Holiday* (1962), *Wonderful Life* (1964) and *Two A Penny* (1967). Meanwhile, his abandoned black leathers, white tie and sideburns, and increasing reliance on 'respectable' songs led to accusations of emasculation and a growing suspicion that his early career as a rock 'n' roll singer was just another role – a possible reason why he failed to make any impression on the US market. In terms of the UK, however, his move towards mainstream pop led to a string of unbroken hits: 'Please Don't Tease' (1960), 'The Young Ones' (1962), 'The Next Time' (1963), 'Summer Holiday' (1963), 'The Minute You're Gone' (1965) and 'Congratulations' (1968 – the Eurovision Song Contest song)³³. Tours, summer seasons, regular TV slots and even pantomime performances confirmed his middle-of-the-road status, albeit that the 'showbiz glitz brought a certain homogeneity to his music and image' (Larkin, 1999, 1035). 'The Young Ones', in particular has proved to be a long-standing pop anthem, not least because of Hank Marvin's memorable guitar playing.

Despite Richard's attempt to brave the Beat boom of the early 1960s, his unsuccessful cover version of the Rolling Stones's 'Blue Turns to Grey' (1965) and the rapidly changing cultural climate of the late 1960s marked a decline in his popularity as a performer with teen appeal. Even so, his determination to remain a performer (albeit at the variety level) is significant and presages the change in career of two other pop idols, David Cassidy and Robbie Williams.

Somebody wants to be wanted

Unlike Cliff Richard, who started as a rock 'n' roll performer who moved into film as a way of extending his fan base, David Cassidy (b. April 12, 1950, New York, USA) started his career as a member of the US sitcom. *The Partridge Family* (1970–4). Inspired by the bouncy harmonies of family group, the Cowsills,³⁴ and with Cassidy's stepmother Shirley Jones (best known for her role in such films as *Carousel*) taking the role of mother, Cassidy, along with Susan Dey and Danny Bonaduce soon attracted attention for their ability to sell records in their own right. The US chart-topper 'I Think I Love You' (1970), with Cassidy as lead singer and Jones on backing vocals, was followed by two more Top 10 hits, 'I'll Meet You Halfway' and 'Somebody Wants To Be Wanted'. It was apparent from the onset that the success of the singles was

largely attributable to Cassidy's blue-eyed, blonde hair, boyish appeal. Recognised as classic teen-idol material, he was launched as a solo artist in 1971 and went to US No. 9 with a revival of Association's 'Cherish'. However, as he subsequently revealed in TV interviews, he was not happy with his image, or with the attendant hysteria that accompanied his live performances, and in an attempt to create a more adult, sexual persona he appeared semi-naked on the pages of *Rolling Stone*. While the attendant publicity undermined his image and reputation as the ultra-clean all-American boy, it seemed curiously to fuel his growing popularity in the UK where adolescent adoration for pop stars was, once again, in the ascendant.

It is difficult not to surmise that the Beatles's shift from Beatlemania (characteristic of their early career) to acid-Gurus had left teenagers somewhat bereft of pop idols. By 1967 the chart-toppers included the Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, Cream, Pink Floyd and Procul Harum, and the release of the Beatles's *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts' Club Band* and the attendant publicity surrounding their espousal of the American west coast's psychedelic philosophy created an attendant moral panic. This was exacerbated in the latter years of the 1960s and early 1970s by the deaths of such iconic figures as Brian Jones, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison. While such folk/rock stars as Donovan might have proved a likely attraction for the young teenager, his lyrics ('Sunshine Superman', 'Mellow Yellow') and more specifically his third album, *Sunshine Superman* (1967), which became something of an early acid-head bible, and his double-album *A Gift From A Flower To A Garden* (1968, with its cover pin-up of guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi) served to undermine the boyish appeal promised by his otherwise whimsical and seemingly naive image, so confirming the old adage that appearances can be deceptive. It is not too surprising, then, that Cassidy seemed an ideal antidote to the problems raised by what the media had termed 'flower power'. Further, the success of The Monkees, whose song 'I'm A Believer' had topped the charts in January 1967,³⁵ suggested that there was an important market to tap.

The year 1972 is thus significant in seeing both Cassidy and Donny Osmond topping the pop charts, the former reaching No. 1 position in September with 'How Can I Be Sure', the former with 'Puppy Love' (July). Clearly the battle was not won, however, for while this signalled a serious break into the teenage market, August saw Alice Cooper's 'School's Out' at No. 1, a song that was finally ousted in September by Rod Stewart ('You Wear Well') and Slade ('Mama Weer All Crazee Now'). Cassidy and Osmond, however, maintained a steady chart presence between 1972 and 1978 and, in Cassidy's case, this was largely attributable to his non-stop tours. As Barbara Ehrenreich observes (with reference to the early Beatles), 'the star could be loved noninstrumentally, for his own sake, and with complete abandon' (Ehrenreich et al., 1992, 97), and the mass hysteria that had accompanied their live performances was replicated by the screaming girls who consistently besieged David Cassidy. Their hysteria was equally critical to his marketing, and the status of teenager once again

became more than a prelude to adulthood; 'it was a status to be proud of – emotionally and sexually complete in itself' (Ehrenreich et al., 1992, 98).

Cassidy's songs were carefully chosen to resonate with his appeal to a young audience. In 1972 he had climbed to No. 2 position in the UK charts with 'Could It Be Forever'/'Cherish' and No. 1 with his cover version of the Young Rascals's 'How Can I Be Sure'. 'Rock Me Baby' just failed to reach the Top 10 and in 1973 he was again in the charts with 'I'm A Clown'/'Some Kind of Summer' and his second UK No. 1, 'Daydreamer'/'The Puppy Song'. It is interesting to note that he was already 22 years old when he made his major inroads into the UK charts and that his repertoire largely consisted of songs raided from old catalogues that had already demonstrated an appeal to a teenage audience. These included 'If I Didn't Care' (an Inkspots hit from the 1930s), the Beatles's 'Please Please Me' and the Beach Boys's 'Darlin'. By 1975, however, the demands made by touring were beginning to show and although he just failed to reach the UK Top 10 with 'I Write The Songs'/'Get It Up For Love', he turned increasingly to drugs and alcohol, returning to Los Angeles for what has been described as 'three dark years'.

'I'm a Believer'

While Richard and Cassidy provide two examples of teen pop idols, the fact that the Beatles provided four different fantasy figures (so allowing for a more diverse fan base) had not been lost on the music business. If rock 'n' roll had made mass hysteria probable, then the Beatles had made it inevitable. While it was also evident that not just anyone could be hyped as a suitable object for fandom, it was also apparent that the success of the Beatles had been augmented by their films, *A Hard Day's Night* and *Help!* What America clearly needed at the time was their own group, one that would rival the Beatles and generate their own 'home-grown' appeal. Recognising that an already existing group would cause problems in terms of identification, US TV producers Bob Rafelson and Bert Schneider (NBC-TV), armed with an advance from Columbia's Screen Gems, began auditions for a show about a struggling pop band. An advertisement in *Variety* resulted in 437 applications, including Stephen Stills, Danny Hutton (later of *Three Dog Night*) and Paul Williams. The final choice paired two musicians, Michael Nesmith (b. Robert Michael Nesmith, December 30, 1942, guitar/vocals) and folk singer Peter Tork (b. Peter Halsten Thorkelson, February 13, 1942, Washington, DC, USA, bass/vocals), with two budding actors and former child stars – Davy Jones (b. December 30, 1945, Manchester, England, vocals) and ex-Circus Boy star Micky Dolenz (b. George Michael Dolenz, March 8, 1945, Los Angeles, CA, USA, drums/vocals) (Kirkpatrick, 1985, 879). On September 12, 1966, the first episode of *The Monkees* appeared on NBC-TV and, despite low initial ratings, the show became hugely popular, a feat mirrored when it was launched in the UK. Attendant singles 'Last Train to Clarksville' and 'I'm a Believer' (US and UK No. 1) and a million-selling debut album confirmed the band as the latest teenage phenomenon.