

first, and feel the sheer bliss of falling head-over-heels in love, I was emotionally empty. It might sound ridiculous, but I could sing in front of 50,000 girls who all loved me, yet I couldn't get a date for a Saturday night. Just like Marilyn Monroe, 'I'd spend the evening alone.'

There were compensations. The money poured in as he sold 25 million records, with hits like *Could It Be Forever*, *How Can I Be Sure*, *I'm A Clown* and *Daydreamer*, as well as the successful *Partridge Family* television series and their records. For five years he worked 18 hours a day on the two careers and setting himself up for life.

But the real pay-off came at his concerts. 'I wish everyone could have been in my shoes, performing in front of 50,000 girls going ga-ga—it's the most electrifying experience. When one person says 'I love you that's wonderful. Well, multiply that by 50,000 and you have some idea of what was happening.'

What really drove girls bonkers, from Skegness to Sydney, was not so much David's songs or even his performances, either on stage or television, but his looks. There was a freshness and brightness about him that is so rare among pop stars—a warm tan, blue melting eyes, a thick mop of hair, and lips that smile rather than frown. It's easy to see why he was able to capture these



"I'd sing for 50,000 girls who all loved me, yet be alone at night"

young female hearts by the million.

But what is surprising is that despite all he's been through, in appearance at least he's changed very little. He still looks as though he's just come down from having lived his life in a log cabin. There is a healthy look to him and vitality about his manner that makes it seem impossible that he'll be 35 in April. He still makes female hearts flutter—only this time it's women rather than girls.

It was this attraction that made David into the first pop star really to be marketed in a big way. There were David Cassidy pillow-cases,

dresses, dolls, bubble gum cards, pencils, notebooks — you name it and they thought of it. They even had him on the back of cornflakes packets. Of the £70 million made from his name and face, he picked up less than £1 million.

Surprisingly, David is not angry with the marketing men who exploited his success so profitably. 'When I signed that contract, I had no idea I was going to be made into pillow-cases. The only thing I regret is that I couldn't have had a bigger say in the way it was done, and ensured that the products were better.'

Having never cared much for either David or his music—what man could stomach any other guy sending girls into such a frenzy?—I found everything about him rather a shock. Not only was he extremely pleasant, friendly and talkative, but he wasn't remotely pompous or arrogant. You'd never for a moment suspect that he was the superstar that security men dreaded more than any other because of the effect he had on his audience.

Refreshingly, he doesn't take himself seriously. 'Who could when they've been on the back of a cornflakes packet?' he laughs. Nor does he regard his music of that time as a great work of art. 'Even if they hated my music, I've always wanted people to feel something. I'd much sooner they loathed it than felt

indifferent. That's really an insult.'

By the time he quit, David loathed his music as well. 'I stopped because I didn't know why I was doing it. It was just filling time and space, and I was going nowhere. I felt that if I continued to make such uninspired music then I would just go further and further downhill until no one cared about me. I'd rather pump petrol than have that happen.'

'I felt that I had to make a choice—either my career had to go or I had to sacrifice my life to my work. That night in New York showed me that. Then soon after I was having dinner with John Lennon, who was just one of the handful of people who had experienced that sort of adulation. And he talked about how he became an ordinary guy, a family man and father, and stopped being a living legend.'

'I owe quite a lot to that conversation—it's the main reason I'm here today and have never felt better. That and the fact that I also met Elvis Presley and, although I liked him, I knew that wasn't how I wanted to live—alone and empty. I could see quite a lot of myself in him, and that frightened me. I knew that if I didn't do something drastic, then I was looking at myself 10 or 15 years later.'

When David retired almost 10 years ago there was no great ▷