

THE PLAY: *Blood Brothers*, a Broadway musical about twins separated at birth in postwar Liverpool. They grow up — one rich, one poor — as best friends *unaware of each other's true identity*.

THE STARS: David Cassidy, 43, and, miraculously, as baby-faced as he was two decades ago aboard *The Partridge Family's* Technicolor bus. It's his first collaboration with half-brother Shaun Cassidy, 34, whose blow-dried 'do and bell-bottomed strut made *The Hardy Boys Mysteries* required viewing for starry-eyed teens in 1978. The two have sold more than 30 million records, several cafeteriafuls of lunch boxes and enough posters to plaster Times Square. The producers drafted David first, who helped lure Shaun. "We got the parts," says David, "because we were the only brothers available who had dolls made of us." (How busy can Jimmy and Donny Osmond be?)

THE FAMILY WAY: David and Shaun are both sons of the late actor Jack Cassidy. Shaun's mother is Shirley Jones, who played David's singing, keyboard-tinkling mom on television. "The play was so powerful," says Jones, who's seen it twice. "I couldn't get out of my seat because I was crying so much." Her immobilization is atypical; usually the 1,012 members of the audience rise for a standing ovation at play's end. Shaun digs it, too. "This is an experience I'll always treasure," he says. "How often in your life do you have the opportunity to do a part with somebody you love?"

THE ACT: The graffiti-covered brick sets are convincingly Liverpoolian, though a bit of New Jersey occasionally creeps into David's high-pitched Cockney accent. And Shaun looks, well, too big for his English-schoolboy britches (their characters are seven for much of the first act). David (the poor twin) teaches Shaun about cap guns, slingshots and the F-word; Shaun gives David tips on seducing girls and on being a gentleman. "We're really like the twins we play," says David. "I was more extroverted, climbed trees, broke my bones." Offstage, Shaun attempts to behave as courtly as his character does; highfalutin phrases like "epiphanic wonders" and "pretenders to the throne" roll off his tongue.



THE DRESSING ROOMS: David's is bigger, because his part is bigger. Perhaps that's why he's so sure that he and Shaun "don't have any of that *angst* about sibling rivalry." Shaun, tired-looking and a bit cranky from eight shows a week, listens, sucking on a cherry cough drop under a sagging bouquet of Mylar balloons. "This is our swan song," he says of their collaboration.

THE AGING-CHILD-STAR THING: Any *Nick at Night* fan who has seen David pitching *Partridge Family* reruns knows that he is cool about the old days. "People no longer think I'm Keith Partridge, so I can go back as David and talk about how great it was when I was 19 or 20," he says. "Let's be honest. It's what made me a star." Shaun, focusing on the future, sees his "Da Do Ron Ron" years as "just a small portion of my life" but admits: "For a lot of

C'mon Get Happy

David and Shaun Cassidy trade in their bell-bottoms for Broadway. We think we love it...

people, we were the first concert, the first record, the first poster. It means a lot to people, and I respect that."

THE FANS: Moments before the curtain rises, Laura Franklin and Kim Joyce, two giddy 24-year-olds from Ocean City, New Jersey, launch into a hyperactive rendition of "I Think I Love You" outside the ladies room. "We're old, and Shaun and David are old," Franklin says, "but they're still our poster boys." Marjon Hoogendam, 34, came from Holland, where she's president of the David Cassidy fan club, to catch five shows in one week. "David's is the only voice that can really touch me," she explains. Of his fans, David says, "Without them, I'm pumping gas."

COMING SOON: After *The Love Boat*, *Fantasy Island*, *David Cassidy: Man Undercover* and a few albums, the elder Cassidy is ready for more interesting parts. "The biggest joke," says David, whose fan club was larger than Elvis', "is, I still get offers for rock-star parts." He's finishing a bio, *C'mon Get Happy*, and developing a TV pilot and a world-concert tour. "The tour will send up *The Partridge Family*," he says. As for Shaun, he's a producer and has just written a TV sequel to *Midnight Run*. "I want to play Danny," he says of David's tour. "Sure," his brother responds. "Get a red wig, gain about 50 pounds, and it would work." ■