

Still cherished

Since his '70s heyday as a teen heart-throb in *The Partridge Family*, David Cassidy has concentrated on acting. Now he's back with a new album

Seventies heart-throb David Cassidy has returned to the UK for his first tour for 15 years, promoting his brand-new album, *Then And Now*. Released last month, the album is a collection of the greatest hits throughout his 33-year-long career.

Cassidy shot to fame at the age of 19, starring in *The Partridge Family*. He acquired a huge fan base and by the age of 21 was the highest paid performer in the world. The pressures of fame led him to 'retire' at the tender age of 24, but within two years his career was back on track when he took to the Broadway stage. David, 51, lives in Las Vegas with his wife, Sue, and their ten-year-old son, Beau. He joins us as this week's special guest on *OK! On Air*.

How did it feel, having your first number one over here with *How Can I Be Sure*?

I'd been working in the US and doing well, but the fans over here were unbelievably enthusiastic. It was really wild. We have such a kinship between our countries it felt like it was an extension of the US for me. I've missed it here. Back in the '70s there was hysteria and it was very difficult for me to get around. The world has changed so much. It was a very naïve time. The audience is much more sophisticated now.

So you think the hysteria that you had has never really been equalled?

The audience is much more fragmented now. There are more radio and television stations. They don't view pop stars as demigods like they did back then. People didn't think you were actually real or human and did things like shopping. I became close friends with John Lennon and he always said the grass is a little greener in the US. Because we lived there we could only come for a certain amount of time and then leave. That had something to do with it as well.

Tell us about being in *The Partridge Family*, the show about a family of musicians...

The shows were written by some of the best artists of all time. They taught me a lot. It became obvious shortly after I was cast that I was the musician and the singer and the rest of them were actors. They tried to make a big deal out of us. They would say, 'You guys

are really popular now', and I was going through hell trying to get in and out of the studio itself in the mornings. The show was very well cast and it was very well crafted.

What music were you into?

The music in the mid to late '60s was what I was most influenced by. I was into R&B, blues and some pretty heavy stuff. The music of the late '60s was very heavy, very electric and Hendrix was by far the most charismatic performer I've ever seen. I had a huge evening with John Lennon at my house on New Year's Eve, 1974. We played some songs together and it was a big thing because The Beatles wrote the soundtrack to my youth. They were the reason I got my guitar out.

Have you got a big band on the road?

I've got 16 people with me. They are all very serious musicians and we have become really close, being on the road for nine months. The band is really slamming. As I'm going to do my first concert tour outside the US for the first time in 10 years, I asked fans all over the world on my website what they wanted me to play. I was really surprised by the response. The number one song was *Cherish*.

Many people may think you have retired, even though you've been working hard...

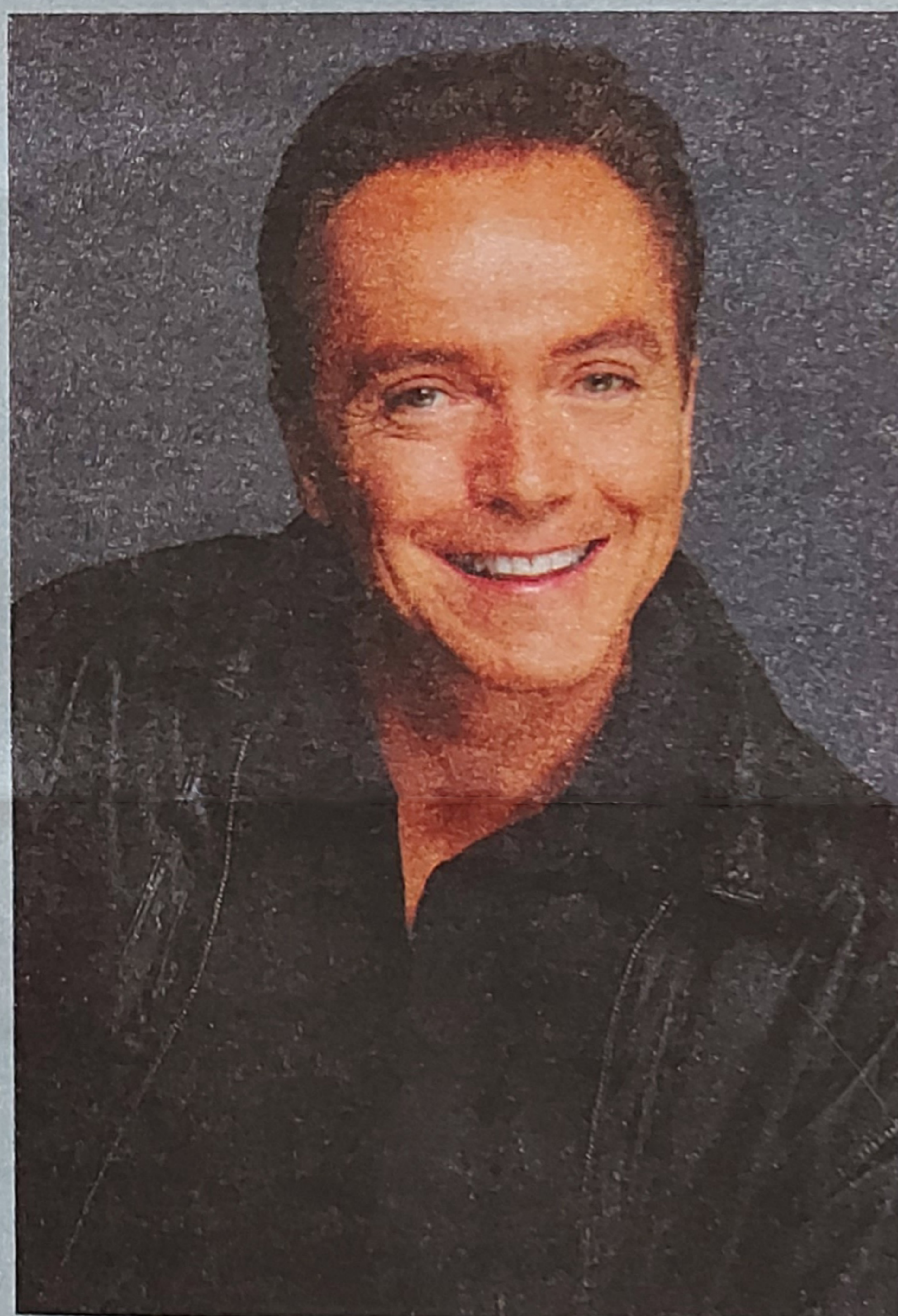
I've been on Broadway. I did *Blood Brothers* with my brother Shaun for two years. I redid *EFX* in Las Vegas, which I starred in for two and a half years, and it was the most expensive show of all time. Lots of fans from the UK came over and saw it. I also wrote and produced *The Rat Pack Is Back*, which has become a big hit in Las Vegas. For the last two years I've starred in a show I produced at the Rio Hotel in Las Vegas called *At The Copa*. Touring round the States for the last nine months has been fantastic.

Have you still got a wide fan base?

Yes, it's really amazing in the US. I haven't been over here to see it yet, but kid fans are now grown-up and their kids are fans.

OK!

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