



David Cassidy will be featured with his real-life step-mom, Shirley Jones, on ABC's "Partridge Family" series in the fall.

Music And Comedy In "Partridge Family"

NEW YORK — Last season ABC scheduled a show called "The Music Scene" which featured recording artists whose latest releases were on the hit charts of the leading trade paper. The logic behind this "guaranteed successful" program was so obvious only the most unsophisticated programming executive could fail to see it. If a million youngsters went out and paid good money for a record and millions more were exposed to the song on their radio stations, naturally they would flock to their sets to watch their idols gyrate on camera. Logical? Of course. But it was one of the year's first cancellations.

Larry Uttal, president of Bell Records, confesses he never saw "The Music Scene". However, Uttal feels the show failed because its basic format was behind the times. Record buyers, he points out, no longer go for syndicated music shows where artists lip-sync their records in return for a plug by the TV disc jockey. The kids have become too hip for this kind of blatant exploitation and that type of telecast is now dated. "But," adds Uttal, "I still have great faith in the power of TV to sell records and I intend to prove it this fall." Wherein hangs his plug.

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ABC has a situation comedy set for the fall entitled "Partridge Family". It is about a mother and her five children who suddenly become recording stars...perhaps best described as a fatherless Cowsills group. If the light isn't beginning to shine through you have never bought a record.

The program will be produced by Screen Gems, the company which once presented "The Monkees" and saw that group's successful records come out on the RCA label. At that time Screen Gems did not own a record company that could have possibly mounted the sales promotion which RCA gave "The Monkees" between "The Monkees" and "Partridge Family", Screen Gems has acquired Uttal's Bell Records.

The die has been cast...the disc will be cut...will Bell ring the bell?

At this very moment Uttal is preparing to record the first Partridge Family single...and he thinks it's a hit. "Of course there's no sure-fire way to call these things," says Larry, whose track record in picking winners earned him a Screen Gems, "but I've put a lot of time and effort into this one. And, in all modesty, we do not intend to leave it completely to chance. There's too much at stake."

The leads on the ABC series are David Cassidy, son of Jack Cassidy, and David's real life stepmother, Shirley Jones. Young Cassidy, according to Uttal, has all the talent needed to be a top star, and he will do his own singing on the show. Miss Jones, as all true Rodgers and Hammerstein fans know, is a pretty good singer in her own right. David and Shirley will be featured on "Partridge Family", records backed up by a studio group of singer. "The music will be used on the telecast but we're not hiding anything. Only David and Shirley will do their own singing. The rest of the cast was selected for acting ability only," says Uttal.

Once the single is ready for release, Shirley and David will embark on a multi-city tour on behalf of the record and the series. A two-week break in production on the series has been planned to expedite the promotion and the bubbly will flow for disc jockeys in any city where the two stars appear. "I throw a pretty good party," confessed Uttal. "But all we are really after is exposure. Let the DJs hear the song, meet the people and—if they like it—give it a spin. We think the music will do the rest."

If the plan succeeds a breathless record-buying public will love the song, buy the record and make the series a landslide hit. On paper, it looks great but so did "The Music Scene". Only time will tell.