



THE LATEST in the singing-acting family trend is the 'Partridge Family,' starring David Cassidy and his step-mother Shirley Jones. Emphasis is on music and comedy. (UPI)

TV Producers Eye Music-Family Ties

NEW YORK (UPI)--Since Ricky Nelson made his singing debut and became a teen-age idol on "The Ozzie and Harriet Show," television producers have devised ways to capitalize on music vis-a-vis the family situation comedy, with some success.

Their latest innovation, "The Partridge Family," premieres Friday, Sept. 25, on ABC-TV and may have the pizzazz to succeed where others have failed.

One reason is its youthful co-star, David Cassidy—a bright, brimming actor-musician of the Monkees group—who will carry the ball in the music department just as Ricky Nelson—

now but a rerun memory—did in less sophisticated, bygone years.

The other reason is the show's unorthodox theme: A family of youngsters ages 5-17 makes the big-time in rock 'n' roll, and led by their mother—in real life David's stepmother—Shirley Jones, tours club dates as the Partridge family aboard a psychedelic bus.

Like the popular Monkees' television show of a few years back—which borrowed heavily on the success of the Beatles' Marx Bros. parody in the film "A Hard Day's Night"—the Partridges will release several youth-oriented songs during the season. Bell Records, a division of Columbia Pictures, has launched an expensive campaign to promote this music.

Already their first release, "I Think I Love You," has made headway on the market charts. And an album of Partridge music will be released in time for the half-hour program's debut.

No one can deny Miss Jones' indefatigable talent. The Rogers and Hammerstein sweetheart of the movie versions of "Oklahoma" and "Carousel" has been awarded and rewarded for her many accomplishments in the theatrical arts—including an Oscar for her role as Lulu Baines in "Elmer Gantry."

Her stepson David—son of Broadway star Jack Cassidy—is not totally without references either. He commanded a co-starring role in the Alan Sherman Broadway musical "The Fig Leaves are Falling," and has been seen on television in "Ironside," "The Survivors," "Marcus Welby," "Adam 12," "FBI" and "Bonanza."

"Partridge" producer Screen Gems feel he is destined to be the next teen-age idol in the rock world. At 20, the 5-foot-8, 130-pound star has been a prime target of teen and pre-teen magazine publishers in recent months.