

Partridges hit with new ingredient, old family recipe

It worked.

Not exactly as it worked with the Monkees. Or the Cowsills. But when the best ingredients from both (TV show format from the Monkees and mom-and-kids-together from the Cowsills) were popped into Hollywood's high-pressure cooker by producer Wes Farrell the result was a plump commercial property that could prove to be more delectable than either the Monks or the Cows.

Already some of you are sneering "bubble gum." Your privilege. Take a pass on this one. It's aimed at West Virginia's share of those 3 million owners of "I Think I Love You." Like Lois Alexander on Clinton Ave. in Charleston, who receives a free copy of the Partridge Family's new album, "Up To Date," for demanding that we write something about them.

But before you college types split, remember it's your peers who made the Carpenters and "Love Story" what they are today. Consider too that Mike Nesmith turned out to be more than a Monkee and the Osmonds were once cute little brothers. Even the Cowsills are coming back with a new label and a new single, "On My Side." And they'll turn some very together heads with it.

It happens that bubble gum sometimes forms the base for substantial pop music.

Sure, every kid sister knows that the Partridges are the plastic cover for

studio musicians. The Monkees had their Don Kirshner and the Partridges have Farrell. He wrote "Hang On Sloopy," produced some of the Cowsills hits, worked with Brooklyn Bridge and has also written advertising jingles. That's the type of background it takes to put a bunch of kids like wisecracker Jeremy Russell Gelbwaks (the pretend drummer) together with Shirley Jones.

The formula is obvious. Widow Shirley will appeal to anybody who can hum "Surrey With The Fringe On Top." Danny, Suzanne and Jeremy capture the primary grades and Susan Dey and David Cassidy pick up the early teens. That's half of America. The remainder has sold its soul to a hundred rock idols.

The Partridges even trade shamelessly in Cowsills-style material. "I Think I Love You" was written by Tony Romeo, composer of the Cowsills "Indian Lake." And Romeo has three songs in the new Partridge album.

There is a David Cassidy composition in the album, too, "Lay It On The Line." It's not bad. "Doesn't Somebody Want To Be Wanted," their current hit, is also included. There's also a real nice song called "She'd Rather Have The Rain" in the album.

The Partridges should be given credit for—unlike the early Monkees—giving credit to the guys who actually make their music. Drummer Hal Blaine, bassist Joe Osborne, keyboard man Mike

Melvoin, and guitarists Dennis Budimer and Louie Shelton are identified on the record jackets in large type.

The Cowsills, a gifted musical family, were able to take their show on the road. The Monkees eventually mastered the rudiments of music. The Partridge Family, alas, will probably never play concerts. Their early hits are too musically complex to grow into.

So you fans will have to be content with Friday nights, hit records, fan mag articles and other favors. If you want to join the Partridge Family fan club and get all the goodies (secret messages from David and Susan along with their private addresses) send your name and address to Partridge Fan Club; 6311 Yucca St.; Hollywood, Calif. 90028. It'll cost you \$2.00. (Ray Brack)



THE PARTRIDGE FAMILY has ridden a proven route to success. From left, Shirley Jones, Denny

Bonaduce, Suzanne Crough, Susan Dey, Jeremy Russell Gelbwaks and David Cassidy.