

# Cassidy takes wing as an actor

**Patricia Rodriguez**  
**Fort Worth Star-Telegram**

DALLAS — David Cassidy's recent stage stint in Dallas as part of the national tour of the musical "Blood Brothers" turned out better than his previous stop here in 1981. But it wasn't that hard to do.

The play he was in 13 years ago reprised the work of George M. Cohen and James Cagney, and Cassidy was compared unfavorably with the two legends. The play's overall reviews were poor, too. And then there was the little matter of the football game scheduled during his play's run.

"Texas was playing Oklahoma in the Cotton Bowl, so what was I supposed to do? Get people interested in this little play I'd come here with? Are you joking?" said Cassidy, laughing a little. "It was a losing battle."

In "Blood Brothers," Cassidy performs the same role he did for 10 months on Broadway. Unlike the Cohen-Cagney play, Cassidy received generally good reviews for his work as one of two brothers separated at birth but destined to play important and ultimately tragic roles in each other's lives.

Also unlike the early '80s, Cassidy seems to have come to terms with his teen idol days of the early 1970s.

He was THAT David Cassidy, too: Keith from "The Partridge Family," shag haircut, embroidered overalls, "I Think I Love You," son of actor Jack Cassidy, stepson of "Partridge Family" mom Shirley Jones, half-brother of "Hardy Boy" idol Shaun Cassidy.

David was surrounded by '70s kitsch.

He spent nearly 20 years trying to distance himself from that teeny-bopper image by releasing albums, working on stage and doing a lot of drugs. (He reported that he's been clean since the mid-'80s, thanks to therapy, work and his third marriage, to songwriter Sue Shifrin. They have a 2-year-old son, Beau.)

But what finally did the trick was when he started goofing on his image himself. He promoted "Partridge Family" reruns on "Nick at Nite," hosted a "Partridge Family" weekend on MTV and, this year, released a tell-all autobiography, "C'mon, Get Happy: Fear and Loathing on the Partridge Family Bus" (Warner, \$11.99).

He wrote the book, he said, partly for the money and partly just to get it all off his chest and answer all those questions about what it was really like. The book, he said, answers anything his

fans would want to know.

But the book covers a good deal more than many people would want to know; it details his affairs with women ranging from "Partridge Family" co-star Susan Dey to Meredith Baxter to an unending parade of groupies and fans, including one he calls Barbara the Butter Queen. (Don't ask.)

If you decide you're going to write an autobiography, Cassidy said, "you might as well tell the truth. My main thrust was, I didn't want to dish anybody. I just wanted to tell what the experience was like."

Short and slightly built, Cassidy, 44, still looks a little like a teen-ager, with his hair carefully moussed to disguise a slight thinning spot on top. He still shows some trappings of teen ideldom by dressing in Hollywood-hip, head-to-toe black: black shirt, black pants, black socks, black loafers, black Gucci bag by his feet, and dark sunglasses, which he wears throughout a round of interviews, although there aren't any windows in this part of Dallas' Music Hall and it was raining outside to boot.

But he admitted he's changed a lot since those earlier days. For one, he takes his wife and son on tour with him now. For another, he didn't hesitate when asked to join the "Blood Brothers" nation-

al tour, which opened in Dallas and will wind up in mid-1995 after more than 20 stops. Such a long-term commitment is unusual for him, he said.

"After six months of everything else, I've stopped. I couldn't do it anymore. Four months... that was enough of anything," Cassidy said. "But this play, I've never stopped getting deeper with it. I never stopped loving it. I never stopped wanting to do it."

"Of all the work I've ever done, this is the best role I've ever had. It's mine. I've never had a piece of work that I've ever done that has so completely and dramatically changed people's perceptions in one evening of me as an actor, as a human, as a performer."

Still, he realizes those old perceptions, although limiting, also help him. His audiences are often filled with fans from the past. But he hopes that if they come to the show because they remember Keith Partridge, they'll leave thinking of him as a mature singer/actor who just happens to be named David Cassidy.

"I just don't think I want to talk about myself anymore," he said. "I want to do it. I want to work, I want to live.... This is one reason I wanted to go out and do this play again: so I could get on with my work."