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Versatile: With 22 albums, David Cassidy enjoys being able to make every one of his concerts different.

David Cassidy: From teen idol to pop survivor

'Partridge Family' star parlays talent to theater, concerts and TV

By Ray Hogan

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"The Partridge Family" ended its TV run 30 years ago, but David Cassidy has been tied to his role as Keith Partridge for all of his professional life.

But rather than fall into a rut, Cassidy has parlayed that fame into a remarkably sturdy career.

He is juggling three projects: his own tour, performances of the theatrical presentation, "The Rat Pack Is Back!," a show he co-created, and serving as executive producer of VH1's "In Search of the Partridge Family," where hopefuls try out to fill the roles of the musical family originally played by Cassidy, Danny Bonaduce, Shirley Jones and Susan Dey.

"Perseverance, good fortune and talent," is how he explains his longevity.

He attributes his work ethic to his father, actor Jack Cassidy, who died in a fire in his West Hollywood, Calif., home in 1976.

"Just because you become very successful, you don't lose the desire to work," he says. "My father was a great role model."

Like many musicians his age, Cassidy's love of music sprang from seeing The Beatles on "Ed Sullivan." He says he tracks his musical evolution with a 20-minute acoustic set during

his concerts.

"I have a lot of material to choose from," he says. "Ninety percent is made up of songs people will know."

When Cassidy was cast as Keith Partridge for the show that began in 1970, he was asked to play a role that was younger than he was. He quickly became one of the largest teen idols of that decade. Songs from "The Partridge Family" were not only hits but

I never tried to be an oldies act. I didn't want to go backward. I want to go forward."

— David Cassidy

exhibited a curious staying power. "I Think I Love You" and "Doesn't Somebody Want To Be Wanted" have become cross-generational kitsch.

In addition to his 22 albums, Cassidy has starred on

Broadway in the original "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" and "Blood Brothers" (with brother Shaun) and in London with Sir Laurence Olivier. In 1996, he went to Las Vegas to star in "EFX" at the MGM Grand. Under his creative direction, it became the most successful production in Las Vegas; Cassidy is credited with bringing in more than 1 million customers.

In 1999, he teamed with writer-producer Don Reo to create "The Rat Pack Is Back!" although he doesn't star in it.

He's also keeping busy with "In Search of the Partridge Family."