

David Cassidy enjoys a novel form of comeback

MAGGIE GALEHOUSE
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Interviewing David Cassidy is a bit like following someone across a stream on a trail of slippery rocks.

The former teen heartthrob and *Partridge Family* star lights from one subject to the next so swiftly, there's no choice but to keep moving and trust you'll make it to the other side.

But he's friendly. And when he breaks into song — a few bars of Chuck Berry's *Nadine*, the Beatles' *A Day in the Life* — his voice catapults you back to the era of shag haircuts and celebs with no muscle tone.

"I think I love you," Cassidy sang. And millions loved him back.

David Cassidy turns 61 next month. During the past four decades, he has starred on Broadway, headlined Vegas shows, appeared on TV, done revival tours, pleaded no contest to DUI charges, got married (three times) and raised two children.

This year marks a quiet Cassidy renaissance, with the entertainer in



FRAZER HARRISON, GETTY IMAGES, FILE
Actor David Cassidy

the pages of a new novel and returning to television Sunday on Donald Trump's *Celebrity Apprentice*. (7 p.m. on Global, 10 p.m. on NBC).

The show gave him a chance to catch up with a few celebrities he already knew, including fellow apprentices LaToya Jackson, Meat Loaf and Dionne Warwick.

Clearly a busy guy, Cassidy is speaking on a cellphone from a farm near Ocala, Fla., where he breeds thor-



FILE
David Cassidy with stepmother Shirley Jones, who played his mom on TV's *The Partridge Family*

oughbreds. He bought his first horse at age 23.

He is also touring, singing *Partridge Family* songs and other hits at casinos and theatres.

"Doing musicals and theatrical productions, I never did any of my hits," he explains. "Now I'm going out and doing these great songs that I haven't sung in years."

In the 1970s, Cassidy reached a

level of popularity comparable to Elvis and the Beatles. He got 50,000 fan letters a week.

"I had people sleeping in front of my home," he recalls. "I couldn't go anywhere. It confronted me from the moment I woke up. There would be 100 people at the lot where we shot *The Partridge Family*."

Six *Partridge Family* albums went gold. Although the TV series ran only four seasons (1970-74), Cassidy's face was everywhere — on magazines, bubble-gum cards, board games.

But the man who played pop singer Keith Partridge had musical tastes that ran along a different track. "I saw Hendrix four times, saw Cream. It was amazing for me growing up in the musical decade of the '60s. I saw the Beatles on television and went out and bought an electric guitar."

Cassidy's son, Beau, is a rhythm guitarist in a band that Cassidy describes as "a little like Coldplay meets pop." Beau has been in the studio recording for the first time with his band. "They're all prodigies," Cassidy

gushes.

Beau, 20, is the same age Cassidy was when cast as Keith Partridge. Although that's more than 40 years ago, British writer Allison Pearson offers a fresh take on the Cassidy era in a new book called — what else? — *I Think I Love You*.

The first half of the book follows 13-year-old Petra, who lives in Wales and sneaks away to London to see Cassidy in concert. The second half picks up when Petra is 38 and discovers an old letter that will bring Cassidy back into her life.

Cassidy is thrilled with the book. He even flew to New York to be a surprise guest on the *Today* show when Pearson was interviewed about the book last month.

"I thought her examination of the human condition of a 13-year-old girl was amazing," he says.

Cassidy's own daughter, Katie, now 24, never fell hard for a male singer, her dad says. At one point, though, she thought she wanted to be a pop star. But she changed her mind.

"I said, 'Thank God.'"