

THURSDAY, 02 AUGUST 2018 16:25

Drummer Talks David Cassidy Band, Special Upcoming Concert in Saratoga

BY THOMAS DIMOPOULOS | ENTERTAINMENT



Teri Coté at the mic, David Cassidy on drums. Teri Coté

“It was a wild ride sometimes and you never really knew what to expect from him, but we were all really close. He was always kind to us, always respectful and without a doubt the funniest guy I’ve ever known.”

—Teri Coté, longtime drummer of the David Cassidy Band, who will perform in a special one-off David Cassidy Tribute Concert in Saratoga Springs Aug. 14.

Teri Coté was 6 years old when the popular Partridge Family TV show concluded its four-year-run of 96 episodes in 1974. A year or two later, inspired by the music of Michael Jackson and Earth, Wind and Fire, she was drawn to the drum kit.

“That’s when I discovered I wanted to be a drummer, or, actually when the drums chose me,” says Coté, who became [a member of the David Cassidy Band](#) in 2003. It is a role she filled for more than a decade.

“He was a really nice guy and it was a lot of fun. We had some wild moments - he was a wild character, you know? But, always very loving to the band, even during the times when he was having a rough time,” she says.

Cassidy’s musical inspiration came from people like Jimi Hendrix and the Yardbirds, but his massive popularity as a teen idol in the early 1970s cemented an image ultimately impossible to shed. “It was a cage he couldn’t break out of - and he did try - but it didn’t work. I think he had a lot of frustration with that,” Coté says.

As a bandleader, Coté says Cassidy liked to keep things fresh, at times changing pre-written setlists at the last instant and creating unpredictable moments. “He liked that energy, creating that intensity. After being who he was in his heyday, I think he really craved that energy, creating excitement in his shows. One way or another he would make sure that was happening.”

Cassidy’s fan base, while not as large in number as once had been, was nonetheless just as energetic and intense. “We saw a lot of people in the front rows who were regulars. They would come from all over the world - which boggled our minds. They just loved him,” says Coté, who makes her home in Massachusetts, just north of Boston.

During some show segments, Cassidy and Coté would swap onstage roles - she picking up the microphone at center stage to sing the Pretenders’ song “Brass in Pocket,” and Cassidy taking a seat behind the drum kit, keeping the beat.

“When he sat to play the drums, he looked like a 12-year-old kid with this huge smile on his face,” Coté says. “He was just...so ecstatic. I admired that he would just let it show like that. I think sometimes he just wanted to disappear into the band and just be an I’m-one-of-the-guys kind of thing.”

The brief role-swapping scenario was played out in a March 2017 show at B.B. King Blues Club & Grill in Times Square. Coté, who took a short break from the band a year-and-a-half earlier, returned that night for a special appearance with Cassidy’s band. The set began with a performance of “C’mon Get Happy,” and concluded 15 songs later with a performance of “I Think I Love You.” It would be the final concert Cassidy and the band would play. Less than nine months later, [the 67-year-old singer died](#) from liver and kidney failure.

[Coté and a varied alumnus from the Cassidy band](#) will perform for the first time together since Cassidy’s death in a special tribute on Aug. 14 in Saratoga Springs. The show will also serve as a fundraiser for the [Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation](#) - an organization close to the singer’s heart. Vance Brescia, longtime guitarist and music director for Peter Noone, will handle a good portion of the vocal duties. [Popular horse trainer and bass player Gary Contessa](#) is also expected to join the band onstage.

“It’s going to be exciting. Everybody’s a great player and we’ll be getting together to rehearse the day before,” says Coté, who maintains a busy schedule between teaching assignments, performing gigs and showcasing her own jewelry line. She and her husband, who is also a drummer, operate a drum shop – soon to expand to three music shops in the state - where she teaches the art of percussion.

After more than a decade of performances with Cassidy, one of Coté’s everlasting memories of Cassidy was his sense of humor.

“David would make us laugh so much. He was really funny. He got that from his dad (Jack Cassidy), I think. He really believed his dad was the funniest person he ever knew,” Coté says. “We had a good friendship, a joke-filled relationship. I have some friends who have a great sense of humor, but David really took the cake. His sense of humor...I really miss that.”

The David Cassidy Tribute Concert will take place 8 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 14 at the Horseshoe Inn, located at 9 Gridley Ave., Saratoga Springs, N.Y., and will benefit the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation.

Tickets are \$50 and available by calling TRF at 518-226-0028 or online at <https://www.trfinc.org/event/david-cassidy-band-special-guests/>.

#