
biography actress Biography: Shirley Jones - Dan T's comments and questions

Posted by Dan Tropea - 2009/12/10 04:32

That was an interesting biography about Shirley Jones on A&E. It is amazing with the extensive movie and stage work she has done that A&E would label her show as part of the TV Mom's Week. Her career just seems incredible. Almost a 50 year career. A few comments and questions

- 1) Jack Cassidy jealous about his son's David's career? To me that is just so sad. You would think that a father would be so proud of his son's career.
- 2) During the pre-Partridge Family show how close was David and Shirley? I know they both stated that they got closer when they starred together.
- 3) Where was David's mother? We saw so many pictures of David with Shirley and i know he considers his half-brothers and really whole-brothers. But i got the sense that he considered Shirley as his mother. What happened to his biological mother? Was he just not close to her?
- 4) I loved The Music Man. That was such a good movie. She seemed like she was good with children both with Ron Howard and later with the kids on the Partridge Family. Of course my favorite movie with her was Carousel. I like Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals. Although i never saw Elmer Gantry.
- 5) Why did David Cassidy leave the Partridge Family? Was it because a fan died during his concert? Also its odd that ABC would just cancel a top 10 show. They must have been convinced that without David there would be no show. Sorry but Shirley had a better voice and was a far better actress.
- 6) That was odd that she won an Oscar for Elmer Gantry but never really made it big as a dramatic actress. She could not have been that old. It seemed like all they wanted to give her was family movies. Well at least she did Music Man. Since Burt Lancaster gave Shirley her big break in dramatic movies did they stay in contact? Did that director ever hire her again? Sometimes directors like to rehire performers if they win an Oscar.
- 7) It does seem like Jones was the ideal Rogers and Hammerstein leading lady. You really could picture her in any role of theirs. She also would have been a natural for The King and I. Actually i think almost any musical she would have been fantastic in.
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- 9) I really liked Jones. She seemed like an honestly nice person. But it did appear tha she let men take over her decision making abilities. She seemed to almost always give in to Jack, married a man because he never stopped persisting then allowed her sons to help break up the marriage.
- 10) I am amazed how long she stuck around with Jack Cassidy. He seemed totally self-destructive and a very sour person to be around. He just seemed so consumed with jealousy. He really had a good life yet he blew it for himself.
- 11) Biography does seem like a cheerleader for celebrities. They seemed to just rave about how audiences love her when she is on stage. Anyone see her on stage? How is she?

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Posted by roberto - 2009/12/10 04:32

1) Jack Cassidy jealous about his son's David's career? To me that is just so sad. You would think that a father would be so proud of his son's career. Poor Jack was heavily into drugs and booze which warped his behavior and which ultimately lead to his death in a fire at home...lit cigarette as I recall.

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Posted by Buster Crab - 2009/12/10 04:32

11) Biography does seem like a cheerleader for celebrities. They seemed to just rave about how audiences love her when she is on stage. Anyone see her on stage? How is she? I've met her. She is quite beautiful in person, far more than the movies ever captured. And you are correct about her enormous talent and screen presence...from OKLAHOMA to THE MUSIC MAN...but big Hollywood musicals were dying (despite the success of THE SOUND OF MUSIC) and there was no studio system to help her find a new niche. Buster
+++++ I should have been a pair of ragged claws scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

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Posted by marianne kehoe - 2009/12/10 04:32

Why did David Cassidy leave the Partridge Family? The fan that died was at a show in London, England that incident happened between the second and third season of the show. The show was not filming during that time (he was doing a series of summer shows all over Europe), and as I recall, that incident happened around mid-July, which sent David into a tailspin (and I think several concerts ended up being cancelled). I am pretty sure that TPF was not a Top 10 show when ABC cancelled it, more like in the low 20's, early 30's in the standings. In the TV movie that was on NBC, there was a scene where David objected to the way a scene was being shot and the producer said that he could easily get someone to replace him. What I am curious about is (and Linda C. probably could answer this one), what about Paul Witt the show's producer? I have heard that he was an absolute jerk to Shirley and treated her really demeaning, and that David almost came to blows with him over it. Truth or ??? As to Jack Cassidy, didn't Shirley accuse him of domestic abuse at one point and had planned to leave him and file for divorce when he died in that fire?
Maryanne

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Posted by Lulu - 2009/12/10 04:32

3) Where was David's mother? We saw so many pictures of David with Shirley and I know he considers his half-brothers and really whole-brothers. But I got the sense that he considered Shirley as his mother. There was a picture of him with Jack and his mom, they even said her name (which I forget). He also said later that since Shirley wasn't his mom that they were able to have some good conversations which made them closer. Damn he was fine looking when he was younger wasn't he ::sigh::
Lulu If you judge people, you have no time to love them - Mother Theresa

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Posted by Boffman - 2009/12/10 04:32

Poor Jack was heavily into drugs and booze which warped his behavior and which ultimately led to his death in a fire at home...lit cigarette as I recall. I was lucky enough to see old Jack perform live. Brilliant, just brilliant.

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Posted by P.J. Gladnick - 2009/12/10 04:32

1) Jack Cassidy jealous about his son's David's career? To me that is just so sad. You would think that a father would be so proud of his son's career. Poor Jack was heavily into drugs and booze which warped his behavior and which ultimately led to his death in a fire at home...lit cigarette as I recall. But Jack Cassidy did great playing the bad guy on a few of the Columbo episodes.

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Posted by Michael Ritchie - 2009/12/10 04:32

A few comments and questions 1) Jack Cassidy jealous about his son's David's career? To me that is just so sad. You would think that a father would be so proud of his son's career. Jack was never a first-string talent or celeb. For a while, his son *was* a first-string celeb, although it didn't last. Jack had talent

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Posted by Sayard - 2009/12/10 04:32

8) Marty Engels ok they stated that in the late 80s his agency took off financially. Well how long did that last? According to Engels they both had little money starting off. Which is odd considering how rather successful her career had been

and the potential she still had in the theater. The sons especially Shaun stated that he was just after his mother's money. Well if his agency was at one point doing well how did it fail? He did seem like a jerk like when he took over the press conference after she won a settlement. Marty Engels, as far as Shirley Jones goes, is an enigma. Nobody has EVER been able to figure out what she sees in that man. I think it probably just boils down to the fact that he worships the ground that she walks on, and she loves him for that. I have to say that he was once very nice to me when I was a kid

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Posted by Ontario Emperor - 2009/12/10 04:32

5) Why did David Cassidy leave the Partridge Family? Was it because a fan died during his concert? Also its odd that ABC would just cancel a top 10 show. They must have been convinced that without David there would be no show. Sorry but Shirley had a better voice and was a far better actress. Among other things, David hated the music that he was forced to perform. Imagine a Hendrix fan suddenly finding himself singing I Think I Love You. He tried to rebel against Keith Partridge in Rolling Stone, but that didn't pan out.

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Posted by MLYoung - 2009/12/10 04:32

What's not to love? I believe she is an honestly nice person. I've never gotten the impression that Shirley has a public face and a private face. I'm sure she lets her hair down some in private, but I think, basically, with Shirley, what you see is what you get. FWIW, I had a coworker who grew up in Beverly Hills. Shirley Jones was one of the moms who drove her as part of a carpool. She described Jones as being a mom

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Posted by Daisy Hilton - 2009/12/10 04:32

Jack was never a first-string talent or celeb. maybe NOT in film, but try saying that to any fan of musical theater! His voice was glorious on a series of studio recordings he did for Columbia in the 60's, one of them being by far the best sung BRIGADOON ever produced - with Shirley Jones as Fiona and Susan Johnson as Meg..maybe Sony will get around to releasing this on cd, like the Doris Day/RobertGoulet ANNIE GET YOUR GUN, the Mary Martin GIRL CRAZY and the Rise Stevens' LADY IN THE DARK. Jack was featured to great advantage in SHE LOVES ME on b'way against Barbara Cook and Barbara Baxley. It is also well-known in theater circles, and has been published as fact, that Cole Porter gave more than a friendly boost to Jack's theater career. Jack wanted the fame that doesn't necessarily come with being a stage performer, and when David achieved the kind of fame that Jack could only dream of, through an addle-pated sitcom, of all things, Jack's jealousy was inevitable... IMHO

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Posted by Regina989 - 2009/12/10 04:32

As to Jack Cassidy, didn't Shirley accuse him of domestic abuse at one point and had planned to leave him and file for divorce when he died in that fire? They were already divorced. Cassidy was also eventually diagnosed as manic-depressive. Reg

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Posted by maryanne kehoe - 2009/12/10 04:32

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infamous RS cover, David was nude almost down to there, and the interview where he admitted to using pot (and cocaine too?) created such a ruckus! Something like that would seem tame by today's standards. Maryanne

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Posted by Morgan La Fey - 2009/12/10 04:32

roles, in light, fluffy movies, I guess. It also didn't help that Miss Jones won for Elmer Gantry just as the studio system was beginning to break down. I wrote an article about this several years ago that was in Cinematographica Illusion. The early sixties was one of those times when there was a shift in consciousness. The studios had finally realized that television wasn't going away. They saw rising labor costs and the rise in property values in LA and the passing of the old studio heads and the shift to on location and foreign productions as the beginning of the end of the old studio system which had provided the support and jobs for valuable actresses. They kept a few going, but actresses, even valuable, talented ones like Miss Jones who were trying to expand themselves were caught in the shifting tides of finance and fashion. Notice the difference in the Oscars between 60 and 65. In 60 the Oscar for best actress went to Elizabeth Taylor for the excreous Butterfield 8, best actor Burt Lancaster deservedly for Gantry, supporting actor Peter Ustinov for doing the same quirky cartoon thing he did for years for Spartacus. In the supporting actress there was really the only mystery, Glynis Johns (For The sundowners. She was later the mother in Mary Poppins), Janet Leigh (Psycho) and Mary Ure (Sons and Lovers. Quick, who saw it or who remembers it or which part she played, was Ure Dean Stockwells mother or his girlfriend? Can't guess. It doesn't matter now, nor did it then.) In the bottom half of the group was Shirley Knight (For dark at the top of the stairs. Shirley Knight is a strange case. A stage trained method actress she was nominated for the part she always played back then, a fragile psychically damaged youngish girl. Actually she and Shirley Jones were about the same age, I think. It was Shirley Knight who made the ungracious but by light of current affairs curiously politically correct remark that Hollywood is the place where they give academy awards to Charleton Heston for acting. Oh, to be young delicately pretty, sveltd and defiant! Of course now we know Miss Knight as the plump, older woman who plays fat, annoyingly twittering frumps in such films as Sharon Stone's Diabolique.) Thusly, we come to Shirley Jones who gave a very good performance but won partly on the basis that she was playing startlingly against type. Her turn in that slip, showing the inside of her thighs, and her gorgeous face leering lasciviously as she laughs at the reports about Elmer Gantry were shockingly sexy and suggestive for the time. Rare was there an actress in those days brave enough to take such a leap. I really don't think Hollywood understood how brave she was. But sadly there wasn't much of a chance to follow up. Look what happened by 65. The Sound of Music was bathing in the glory of the last really great film musical success pre-Grease but Julie Christie's naturalistic non-acting won best actress for Darling. Lee Marvin was Hollywood's way of saying Hollywood doesn't like real male actors (Compare Lee Marvin to Richard Burton, Lawrence Olivier, Rod Steiger, or Oskar Werner from who he was chosen as the best and explain what Hollywood was thinking. Maybe they were all already stoned on weed. Lastly for supporting actress that brings us to Shelly Winters who won for one of her typical flabby scenery chewing performances in a movie that was a lame Hollywood attempt at being safely PC. The real acting in the film Miss Wnters won for

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Posted by Chris Borg - 2009/12/10 04:32

Oscar for his atypically serious turn in THEY SHOOT HORSES, DON'T THEY. Then again, maybe you should just

watch ELMER GANTRY.

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Posted by Barry Margolin - 2009/12/10 04:32

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Posted by Linda F. Cauthen - 2009/12/10 04:32

As to Jack Cassidy, didn't Shirley accuse him of domestic abuse at one point and had planned to leave him and file for divorce when he died in that fire? Nope. She had already divorced him by then. Linda C.

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Posted by Debbie - 2009/12/10 04:32

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Posted by Elayne Riggs - 2009/12/10 04:32

He tried to rebel against Keith Partridge in Rolling Stone, but that didn't pan out. Oh, I remember that infamous RS cover, David was nude almost down to there, and the interview where he admitted to using pot (and cocaine too?) created such a ruckus! The Naked Lunch Box. But you left out the best line, about the sticky seats. :) I remember how the teen mags scrambled after that one! It's All A Lie, David Says! Heh. And yeah, really tame stuff compared to Come On, Get Happy. :) - Elayne

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Posted by Michael Ritchie - 2009/12/10 04:32

his wife away with a shotgun or was it a hand gun. That would be a question mark instead of a period. It wasn't him shooting his wife that ended his career, but then shooting himself afterwards. And it's doubtful that he would have gotten another Oscar

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Posted by Jim Beaver - 2009/12/10 04:32

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Posted by Daisy Hilton - 2009/12/10 04:32

Anybody see the Shirley Jones bio or the wretched David Cassidy TV movie and want to cry along with me about the tragedy of this fabulously talented theatre star being reduced to a bad-guy freak in the name of that excrement called THE PARTRIDGE FAMILY? Tony-winner for SHE LOVES ME, nominee for SUPERMAN, MAGGIE FLYNN, FADE OUT-FADE IN, Emmy nominee, etc. Not just the guy who turned down the role of Ted Baxter!!!! And I love Shirley (why didn't she do the movie of SOUTH PACIFIC too?) JONES so don't go there. She's a two-time stand-by her-difficult-man gal. And any eternally beautiful ingenue who prefers men with wit is a champ in my book. Anyway, Cassidy fans out there. Let's form a club and fight back for the star of WISH YOU WERE HERE, HE AND SHE, W.C. FIELDS AND ME, etc. He truly was the Barrymore of musical theatre and one of its most recorded artists!

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