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**GETTING THEIR GROOVE ON:** Members of Hi-5 will perform this weekend in Anaheim and at UCLA's Royce Hall. "It's really a rock concert for kids, a kid mosh pit," said one of the performers.

# Hi-5's high energy

**Fitness-oriented show gets kids moving and learning.**

By **LYNNE HEFFLEY**  
Times Staff Writer

**"H**I-5," the American version of Australia's hugely

popular kids' show of the same name — it gives those other Aussie phenoms, the Wiggles, a run for their money — is a colorful, feel-good, fitness-oriented show that airs on cable TV's Discovery Kids and TLC targeting viewers ages 2 to 7.

Its winning formula: five hip, young professional performers who deliver each week's educational, affirming messages with bouncy dance moves, catchy singalong songs, skits and puppetry in a colorful playhouse setting.

Fans can catch the cast — and puppet regulars Jup Jup and Chatterbox too — in a live stage show version of its show when it makes tour stops on Saturday at the Grove of Anaheim and Sunday at UCLA's Royce Hall.

"It's really a rock concert for kids, a kid mosh pit," said Jennifer Peterson-Hind, 27, who as Jenn on the show pairs up with "girlie-girl" puppet Chatterbox.

"I think that's what sets the TV show apart from most too," Peterson-Hind said. "It's not a show kids just watch. I think that's where the whole idea of the show is brilliant. It's not really teachy, even though kids are learning. It's like we're cool babysitters or brothers and sisters. We can have fun and experience

new things together.

"And it's cool to see it in a live setting," she said. Audience participation is key, so theatergoers young and old become part of the show.

"They're all up out of their chairs, a lot of talking back and forth. We have songs about colors and rainbows and wishes and music, and they're all very active — we're all up, we're all dancing."

Conceived by Helena Harris and Posie Graeme-Evans, "Hi-5" came to Australian television in 1998. It now rivals the Wiggles as that country's top children's entertainment.

The show was created, Harris said, to "more than anything

else, celebrate difference — in ethnicity, backgrounds, talents and in learning styles." Many children learn kinesthetically, she said, "and that's very much what Hi-5 is all about: encouraging children to get up and move as they take on new stimuli and learn new things."

The theatrical version, described by Peterson-Hind as "a sort of supersized version of the television show," is designed the same way, but the benefit of being in the theater is that the actual interaction can be so much more, Harris said.

"We will never ask a question on television, because we don't want a child to feel that we're pretending we can hear. But on stage, the cast can interact with the child in the audience and encourage them to get up and dance. We remove that fourth wall, and it's very much our performers reaching out to the children in the audience — and the parents, I have to say."

Peterson-Hind, who recently released a country pop solo CD, has been with the TV show for five years, cast just days after she arrived in New York as a recent graduate of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, hoping to catch a break in musical theater.

"When I was thinking of my career plans, I never thought, I want to do children's television," she said. "It's definitely awesome. I get to do what I love and also get to be a role model as part of something that's so positive."

## Hi-5

**Where:** The Grove, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim

**When:** 1 and 5 p.m. Saturday

**Price:** \$25 to \$45

**Contact:** (714) 712-2700;  
[www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com),  
[www.hi5us.com](http://www.hi5us.com)

## Also

**Where:** Royce Hall, UCLA, 340 Royce Drive, Los Angeles

**When:** 1:30 p.m. Sunday

**Price:** \$23 to \$36

**Contact:** (310) 825-2101;  
[www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com),  
[www.hi5us.com](http://www.hi5us.com)