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TWEENS ATWITTER OVER SATURDAY'S SHOW

Cheetah Girls fans feline groovy

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Saturday is girls' day out for the Pressleys. First, Patty and Kaylan are getting their nails done. Next they're going to a concert and then a nice dinner.

Kaylan has her outfit ready. She's wearing brown, sparkly leggings, a pink animal-print top with sequin bands at the bottom, a pink corduroy jacket and pink cowboy boots.

It is Cheetah-licious.

If you're wondering what Cheetah-licious means, then you probably don't have teen or pre-teen girls. It's a term The Cheetah Girls, the latest kids' sensation, use to describe anything cool.

Tickets to Saturday's Cheetah Girls show at 10,000-seat Cricket Arena -- to which Patty Pressley and 7-year-old daughter Kaylan are headed -- sold out in 20 minutes when they went on sale in August. The Cheetah Girls have sold out most of their 60 national tour dates.

"We seriously lucked out," Pressley said.

That's an understatement. Tickets retailed for \$28.50 to \$38.50, but Thursday afternoon on eBay, a block of four tickets was available for \$549.

The members of The Cheetah Girls, a girl group created by Disney, have starred in two Disney Channel movies that -- along with the smash hit "High School Musical" from earlier this year -- have taken the kids' and tween markets by storm. The companion soundtracks and tours, featuring the Disney stars, have filled the squeaky-clean void left by '90s pop acts such as the Backstreet Boys and a more innocent Britney Spears.

"A lot of kids that were in that tween age group didn't have music that was appealing to them, or that their parents would let them listen to," said Sandi Hemmerlein, senior marketing director for Razor & Tie record company. Razor & Tie produces the popular "Kidz Bop" CD series, which features clean versions of pop songs.

The kids market is so big that children's music held the top three spots on Billboard's album charts during one week in early March.

"High School Musical" was No. 1. It's now triple-platinum and is expected to be the best-selling CD of the year. "Kidz Bop 9" was No. 2, and Jack Johnson's "Sing-a-longs and Lullabies for the Film Curious George" was No. 3.

"The Cheetah Girls 2" soundtrack, a mix of hip-hop, pop and Latin songs, debuted at No. 5 on the album charts in August. The Cheetah Girls are four multiethnic and sassy high schoolers who dream of becoming singing stars. They wrestle with issues such as responsibility (walking the dog) and trust (maxing out mom's credit card).

Adrienne Bailon, 22, plays Chanel, the Hispanic daughter of a man-crazy mother; Kiely Williams, 20, plays Aquanetta, the pursed-lipped black girl who is too stuck up to take the subway; and Sabrina Bryan, 22, plays Dorinda, the white foster child who dreams of being a dancer.

Raven Symone, 20, -- who plays Galleria, the black girl with delusions of grandeur -- does not tour with the group because she has a solo music career not affiliated with The Cheetah Girls.

Girls followed their adventures on the Disney original movie "The Cheetah Girls." Based on the best-selling books by Deborah Gregory, it was the No. 1 basic-cable movie among children 6 to 14 when it came out in 2003. The sequel, "The Cheetah Girls 2," proved equally popular.

The success of these Disney programs is a combination of timing, marketing and realistic themes -- for example, wanting to be a star, but contending with parents who don't want their children to be disappointed, or being poor with richer friends.

"Kids appreciate guidance in a hip format," said Charlotte Reznick, a psychologist and former UCLA Associate Clinical Professor of Psychology. "When kids are young, they have the Power Rangers. When they get older, they lose some of the interest in magic and super powers."

Disney's marketing push has been relentless. It airs The Cheetah Girls movies constantly. It cross-promotes characters and shows. For example, Symone is a Cheetah Girl and also stars as herself in "That's So Raven." Miley Cyrus, daughter of country singer Billy Ray Cyrus, will be one of the opening acts at the Charlotte show. She stars in the Disney Channel TV series "Hannah Montana."

Kandy Hoyle of Forest City said her 9-year-old daughter, Kelsey, watches "Hannah Montana" and "The Cheetah Girls." Hoyle drove one hour to Spartanburg to buy "The Cheetah Girls 2" soundtrack at Target. CDs purchased at Target stores had codes to buy concert tickets before they went on sale to the general public.

Hoyle is taking her daughter and her 9-year-old niece to the concert on Saturday, which is Hoyle's birthday.

"I'm spending my 36th birthday seeing The Cheetah Girls," she said good-naturedly.

Charlotte's Pressley bought the concert tickets for Kaylan's seventh birthday in August. She also gave her daughter a pink CD player and "The Cheetah Girls" soundtracks.

Kaylan wants to meet The Cheetah Girls. She has an idea for them: They should do a TV show about three girls who are big fans and won't leave The Cheetah Girls alone, she said.

A 7-year-old pitching an idea for a show? Cheetah-licious!