

Singer Matisyahu in sync with Olympic spirit

Fri Nov 13, 2009 6:52pm EST



NEW YORK (Billboard) - Matisyahu, whose music merges Hasidic Judaism with reggae beats, hip-hop and rock, is lending his voice to NBC's promotion of the 2010 Winter Olympics.

The network has chosen his uplifting anthem "One Day" as the theme song for its "Countdown to Vancouver" promotional campaign.

By Kelly Staskel

"One Day" is the lead single from Matisyahu's third album, "Light," which Epic released in August. He describes the song as being about "unity and coming together for one common cause; about putting aside all differences and issues to connect in some way."

The spot premiered November 3, ran November 4 on all of NBC's affiliated cable networks, including Bravo, Oxygen, MSNBC and USA, and will air on NBC through February. It features Vancouver contenders Apolo Ohno (speed skating), Lindsey Vonn (alpine skiing), Shaun White (snowboarding), Gretchen Bleiler (snowboarding) and Tanith Belbin and Ben Agosto (figure skating) describing what the Olympics means to athletes and spectators alike. The Winter Games take place February 12-28.

"When you see what those athletes go through and being the background for that," Matisyahu said, "it pulls on the heartstrings."

For the week ended November 8, "One Day" experienced a 13 percent increase in download sales -- its first weekly increase since the beginning of October. To date, the song has sold 117,000 downloads, according to Nielsen SoundScan. In keeping with his cross-genre style, Matisyahu said fans can expect a new version of "One Day" featuring Akon to premiere in the next few weeks.

In the meantime, Matisyahu is touring in support of "Light," working with Kenneth Cole on the "One Day for Change" viral campaign on Twitter and participating in a Charity Folks online auction -- the prize being a Brooklyn bike ride with the recording artist. Matisyahu is also finalizing details for his fourth annual Festival of Light in New York during Hanukkah, which begins December 11.

(Editing by SheriLinden at Reuters)

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