

Billboard



OLYMPIC DREAMS

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NOVEMBER 21, 2009

Apart from the gold, silver and bronze medals, the Olympics are about bringing together various countries and cultures. As an artist who merges Hasidic Judaism with reggae beats-- plus hip-hop and rock-- Matisyahu can definitely relate. The artist's uplifting anthem, "One Day," has been tapped as the theme song for NBC's "Countdown to Vancouver" promotional campaign for the 2010 Winter Olympics (Feb. 12-28).

"One Day" is the lead single from Matisyahu's third album, "Light," released in August. The Epic artist 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 Nov. 3, ran all day Nov. 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 mean to athletes and spectators alike. Matisyahu says, "When you see what those athletes go through and being the background for that . . . it pulls on the heartstrings."

For the week that ended Nov. 8, "One Day" experienced a 13% 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 says 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 artist. Matisyahu is also finalizing details for his fourth annual Festival of Light in New York during Hanukkah, which begins Dec. 11.