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CHECKING IN Matisyahu

Singer soundtracks Olympics ad, preps Hanukkah festival

GOING FOR GOLD Dudes with yarmulkes aren't usually associated with bobsleds. But reggae singer Matisyahu is changing that: Starting this month, "One Day," the anthemic first single off the Brooklyn MC and Hasidic Jew's new album, *Light*, will soundtrack NBC promos for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. (The games open in February.) "We have to hold on to the vision of global oneness," says Matisyahu, who calls for "no more war" in the Wyclef-style reggae-pop tune. "You can get that feeling from a shot of heroin, but if you don't want to go that far, turn on the song."

GOOD SPORT Matisyahu's favorite sport is football - "My dad and I used to watch Giants games on Sunday," he says - but he wants to hit the ice with the Canadian Olympic hockey team. "I'm a little afraid, because I tore my ACL in 2007," says Matisyahu, who played hockey in high school. "I had to hobble around on-stage with a cane. It sucked."

LIGHT IT UP Matisyahu released *Light*, his third studio LP, in August. The disc - which got help from Strokes producer David Kahne - mixes the MC's trademark dancehall grooves with pop flourishes and New Wave-y synths. "I was listening to a lot of electro stuff, like Ratatat and MGMT," says Matisyahu. "I wanted to move in the direction that music is moving in."

HOLIDAY JAMS On December 10th, Matisyahu will kick off the Festival of Light, an eight-date run of gigs - one for each night of Hanukkah - in New York. The shows will feature guests like Gym Class Heroes' Travis McCoy. "We have a dreidel-shaped disco ball, and we light a six-foot menorah," says Matisyahu. "Hopefully it doesn't fall over."

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