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Sporting symphony

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IT was a moment for rejoicing. KRU - brothers Norman, Yusry and Edry - one of the most successful music acts in the country, was releasing Never Let The Spirit Dies (no, not "die!"), composed especially for the Kuala Lumpur '98 - XVI Commonwealth Games.

At the launch were Sukom and Pepsi (official soft drink of the Games; Pepsi collaborated with KRU with regard to the song's promotional campaign) officials, including Sukom Ninety-Eight Bhd chairman, Tan Sri Gen (R) Hashim Ali.

As the launch's Press conference began, a journalist asked: "Is this the official song of the Games?"

Pause. Hashim turned and whispered to his aide. After a moment he answered: "This is one of the campaign songs. We have many campaign songs."

Pause again. "So - which is the official song?" asked the persistent journalist.

Hashim and aide conferred again. "Forever As One performed by Roy and the National Choir is the official song. Other songs are to capture the spirit of the Games. Have I answered your question?"

"Yes, but what about Ella's Standing In The Eyes Of The World written by Wah Idris and David Gates?"

After a moment of hushed discussion, Hashim said: "That's actually another campaign song, specifically, a tribute to our Prime Minister."

Okay. According to people in the know, Standing In The Eyes Of The World will be played whenever the Prime Minister makes an appearance at Sukom events.

This would explain why the song was played at the recent Bangsar Carnival, which was graced by Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamed.

Elsewhere, only Victor Chua's (son of Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng) Share The Dreams was performed, at the launch of the Bukit Jalil Stadium on July 11.

We also have the Malaysia Airlines/BMG album, Let The Games Begin. Where does that fit in? The album features Ziana Zain and Amy Mastura, with saxophonist Nasir and singers from the airline, performing several "geared-for-the-games" tracks.

Meanwhile, Adibah Noor's Destination, by far the most long-running campaign song on the airwaves, and hence, most familiar, seems relegated to the role of travel industry promo.

And Warner Music recently released an album entitled Suara Gemilang. The CD cover boasts the Sukom '98 logo, with a strapline that proclaims: Album Rasmi Sukan Komanwel Ke XVI.

The album, apart from offering Roy singing Forever As One (the Bahasa Malaysia version is Bersatu Selamanya), includes a group effort by Amelina, Shades, Fish, Rem, Anuar Zain, Hattan and Nora, singing a spirited song appropriately called Satu Wawasan.

Warner also released Voices of The Games, (album?) with the strapline The Official Album of The XVI Commonwealth Games. This contains a collaboration between David Foster, Celine Dion, Peabo Bryson and Color Me Badd.

A small-time rock band, Sweet Child, has also recorded a song with that Malaysia Boleh theme, entitled Meraih Juara, on an album of the same title.

Meraih Juara has apparently got the green light from RTM to be part of the Sukom campaign on RTM channels.

The plot thickens. Just before presstime, another album reached our desk! It was from Sony Music, and is called, simply, Kita Boleh!

How often has the official song (with Roy and the choir) been played?

Not, it seems, as often as have other campaign songs. Perhaps this is what has created some confusion.

Looking at other major world events, one recalls that, for instance, during the last World Cup tournament, the official song was The Cup of Life (La Copa de la Vida) performed by Ricky Martin.

The anthem was Do You Mind If I Play by Youssou N' Dour & Axelle Red (you know, the one with painted bare-footed kids playing football in a small village).

Campaign songs, however, written by different people for different reasons, were in abundance. We had the Spice Girls' Viva Forever, Chumbawamba's Top of the World, Coco Lee's Colours of the World, and many more.

The situation was much the same for the Olympics. At the 1996 Olympics, for example, we heard Reach by Gloria Estefan.

And who hasn't heard of Whitney Houston's One Moment In Time, which received prominence worldwide as THE Olympic track of 1984?

With KL '98, it is only natural to hope for the official song and anthem to come from our country.

But since the Games are shared by at least 70 countries - we provide the venue - we may expect songs to come from any Commonwealth nation, just as Puerto Rican Martin's song became the official one for the France '98 World Cup.

At the end of the day, it is the sporting and sharing spirit we are promoting.

Though we now have quite a number of songs associated with this year's Commonwealth Games, therefore, there may well be more to come, perhaps even from other parts of the world!

So - let the games begin!

(END)