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Raring to go

By Shuib Taib

Siti Nurhaliza is taking everything in her stride. The preparation for her London show on April 1 at the majestic Royal Albert Hall has been a gruelling one. Practice, practice, practice ... that's all she has been up to of late. Shuib Taib spoke to her on Monday.

Q: At a recent meeting, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that it was important that you speak good English during your performance. Any comment?

A: I respect his comments because what he said is true. This (Royal Albert Hall performance) is not like the usual dinner shows I've done. It has to be of world-class standard and I must be prepared in every department, not just vocals.

I found out that my audience will comprise Asians who will bring along their friends, some of whom are Londoners. I do know that I need to speak well for their benefit.

When performing for an audience as diverse as this, a lot of them will not have heard of me before so they need to know my background too! Not to mention the need to explain the story behind each song. All these have been taken into consideration.

I had asked Jit Murad (to coach) but unfortunately, he was not available. But thank God Mahadzir Lokman was free! At the moment, he is helping me with my communication in English on stage.

Q: Aren't you taking any English lessons?

A: Yes. That is ongoing.

Q: Tell us about how this opportunity to sing at the prestigious venue came about.

A: Well, we at Siti Nurhaliza Production Sdn Bhd toyed with this idea three years ago. Someone approached us and offered to help but it didn't materialise.

Subsequently when we wanted to do it on our own, we weren't sure how to go about it. Then, last year after working with Putrade during the Secretaries week, I broached the topic with Fazley (Putrade's general manager) who showed a keen interest. We started mapping it out and then one day Fazley broke the wonderful news.

April 1, the show date is the same date my first album, Jerat Percintaan, was released 10 years ago. So I had to "slap" my face many times because it seems almost unreal. There is no better way to celebrate my 10th anniversary in the business!

Q: Can this be considered the pinnacle of your career?

A: Hardly! I look at it as a chance to test international waters. I want to go far. In fact, I feel like I am starting all over again. This is like a new phase for me.

Q: Are you satisfied with your preparations so far?

A: Not really. Three months is not enough time for me to prepare. If it were up to me, I would have started much earlier. But there were road tours to fulfil and a host of other things that needed to be completed first, like the Indonesian concert tours and the "Siti Nurhaliza Fantasia Tour" before that.

Q: What does this concert mean to you?

A: I feel honoured. I am also lucky because I will be accompanied by my family members as well as some VVIPs. These include the Sultan of Pahang and his consort and the Deputy Prime Minister's wife, Datin Rosmah

Mansor. This concert is my little contribution to the country.
(END) Source : New Straits Times