

CASE STUDY

“WE ARE IMMENSELY PROUD OF WHAT SHE HAS ACHIEVED AND FEEL PRIVILEGED TO HAVE PARTNERED WITH SUCH AN INCREDIBLE ARTIST.”

Marie-Ann Robert,
MD, Sony Music France

ORCHESTRATING THE RETURN OF AN EXCEPTIONAL ARTIST

In summer 2023 the track *Makeba* by the acclaimed French artist Jain took the world by storm, going viral and accumulating over 21 million creations on TikTok with over 66 billion views to date. The song has had over 430 million streams worldwide, reached #1 on the Global Shazam Chart and has helped attract over a million subscribers to Jain's YouTube channel.

It is also bringing global attention to Jain and her new studio album, *The Fool*, released in April 2023, thanks to a campaign that Sony Music France started over a year ahead of release.

Makeba was originally released in 2015, on Jain's debut album *Zanaka*. The song, which pays homage to Miriam Makeba, the South African singer and civil rights activist, became an international hit and with its infectious Afro-pop sound years ahead of its time, established Jain as an exciting new voice in France. In France and many countries in which the track was exposed thanks to a strong and consistent synch and playlisting strategy

“Jain was unique from the off,” says Marie Kliszowski, Marketing Director, Columbia Records France. “Her mother is part Malagasy, part French, and her father's work meant the family had to travel and live in various countries - including the Republic of the Congo, and the Emirates. Throughout this time, she discovered different cultures and different musical influences, and it's all there in her music which is why it is so unique.

“I hadn't even joined the label when her first EP, *Hope*, came on the French market in 2014. I remember being wowed by her. She was already touring a lot, with a really unique proposition from a musical and staging point of view. She was a solo artist using loop pedals on tour, and it was so impressive the way she managed her performance; it was a rare and totally singular mix of different influences and true modernity. Jain was already so ahead of her time.

“From the beginning, the A&R strategy has always been to help her stay true to who she is, and what she wanted to represent. And it's always been really important to impose a strong visual unity to the campaigns that work with her musical uniqueness. She's kind of a genius, even on the design side when it comes to her cover art. I guess all the trust we now have as a team on the vision for how to develop the new project comes from those strong roots at the beginning.”

A second album, *Souldier*, followed in 2018, going to #1 in France resulting in Jain's career continuing to expand. “The strategy was territory by territory and the local knowledge that Sony Music has around the world was crucial here,” says Marie. “It's important for us to be precise in each territory, to know how to reach a particular audience by the right performance or the right sync. It differs in each country, but we have the right organization and impulse to do it globally, but precisely, at Sony Music Entertainment”

And then came a four-year break before the release of *The Fool* in 2023 - a long time in pop music.

“The pandemic was partly responsible,” says Marie “but Jain had done almost 300 tour dates across the first and second albums and I think she was exhausted. She felt like she was not giving the audience as much as she used to, and she needed to stop and take some time out, so she could take pleasure in music again - she needed a pause to find her new inspiration.”

For the Columbia team, preparation began well over a year ahead of the new album.

“We reignited the catalogue a year before starting *The Fool* campaign, says Marie, “We studied the data on her audience and one year before she came back, we (re)activated her social networks, and created new profiles for her on some new platforms that didn't exist until recently. The double objective was to speak to her existing audience but also to reach a new generation that knew maybe one or two songs from Jain but weren't yet fans. In close collaboration with Jain and her team, we created assets and creative content to present her brand-new artistic proposition but linked it to the familiar musical and visual universe of previous albums - and it was incredible seeing how that took off on socials.”

Marie is excited by the impact on the new album and what comes next. “The first single, *The Fool*, has been a great success in France - we're certified Gold both here and in other places in Europe.

“We created an amazing website for *The Fool* which, for us, is a place where the public can really have an experience and dive into the cosmos she has created for this album.

“The visual theme for it is based on the Tarot de Marseilles, one of the oldest and most popular tarot decks created. Jain has redesigned her own tarot cards and people are seeing those visuals as we've rolled them out across the videos and TV appearances, and even her outfits. Jain has always worked with renowned designers - her outfits on the first and second album campaigns were made by Agnes B - and she is now working closely with Marie Grazia Chiuri, head of design at Dior. Maria Grazia is making all her stage outfits, and the process for that is amazing; it's the real French perfection of haute couture.

“Jain completed her French tour in autumn 2023 and is now preparing for more international festivals and tours for 2024. We'll be doing TV appearances on European channels around the end of the year on the next single from the album *Night Height*.”

Jain is also one of the first ever French female artists to be included on the international version of the globally successful videogame *Just Dance*. She has been on *Just Dance 2024* which has been released in October 2023. “It's great visibility for her,” says Marie, “and it enhances and continues all the work we are doing on the international scene for the project.”

“We've been 100% focused on Jain's new album,” reflects Marie, “but our strategy on the catalogue enabled a new generation to discover and identify Jain, and for others to have a reminder of her prolific career. As a result, a global audience took over *Makeba* this last summer and (re)discovered the power and the emotional impact of this visionary track. We've taken this major opportunity that we've provoked to bring that audience to the new repertoire. And we are working on it every day.”

“2023 allowed the world to be captivated once again with Jain's creativity and boldness. Not only was she successful with her incredible album THE FOOL but she also canonized her songs as both timeless and universal. Jain is an exciting example of modernity, in the way she embraces innovation in music, gaming and fashion, and through her creative spontaneity and intimacy she with her fans during live performances.

This is also a celebration of teamwork and their relentless focus on always putting the artist first. Thanks to a shared vision and fluid collaboration with Jain and her team, we managed to build and deploy a consistent and successful global strategy. More than 200 people were involved in supporting Jain this year - from international sales to our catalog department, from sync to brand teams, from artistic to image department, from innovation to social teams and from promotion to marketing. We are immensely proud of what she has achieved and feel privileged to have partnered with such an incredible artist.”

WARRIOR