Jon Batiste is an American singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, bandleader, composer, and activist. An acclaimed jazz artist from the start of his career, Jon gained major national recognition in the United States as bandleader of The Late Show with Stephen Colbert on CBS, on which he led his band Stay Human from 2015 to 2022. But it is on his most recent two albums, released on Verve Records, where the artist has reached new artistic heights, with WE ARE and World Music Radio receiving huge acclaim, and seen him start connecting with a global audience.

Verve Records’ President Jamie Keents and SVP of A&R and Artist Development Dahlia Ambach-Caplin talk about the label’s relationship with the Grammy and Oscar winning polymath:

“Jon is a really extraordinary artist,” says Ambach-Caplin. “I’d known him from before his bandstand days on The Late Show with Stephen Colbert! He was an amazing musician in New York who used to light up venues in a most unusual way for a jazz artist, he was magnetic. Once signed, he was immediately a priority for us.”

“I believe he really benefits from being on a label,” says Keents. “The first seven years of his public career were dominated by him being on the Colbert show, so he had tremendous exposure in the US. But the downside of that was he couldn’t tour easily, and he especially couldn’t tour internationally. His career had therefore been very US-centric. Now, about 80% of his sales and streams are global.

“That’s a big point of pride for us, and I think to cut through internationally, you still need a team, and real boots on the ground. You need people in those markets navigating the idiosyncrasies of their territory. The aggregate of all that knowledge and effort gives you a global profile.

Jon’s two albums on Verve have been critically lauded — We Are winning five Grammys in the 2022 awards including Album of the Year, and his current World Music Radio album earning him six more nominations at the 2024 ceremony. Jon is now able to fully tour on the back of his new album.

“One of the real breakthroughs of this project is that he’s finally been able to travel,” Keents says. “On a promotional and marketing level, we’re getting to bring him to do big TV shows in the UK and France. We’re also getting him to appear at a festival in Tokyo with New Jeans, one of the biggest K-Pop acts in the world; we’re just getting going. We’re not substituting for that work, you can’t just do all that on social media. You have to show up, and Jon is completely focused on getting out there and playing this music.”

“He’s an elite live performer,” says Ambach-Caplin. “And now he’s finally hitting the road, touring the entire United States for the first time two months. And we are very confident that when people see him, they’ll be forever converted to superfans.”

Jon’s genre-defying music means Keents feels Verve Records is the perfect label home for him, yet puts him in a position where he can benefit from Universal Music Group’s (UMG) full suite of services.

“There are all of these great labels at UMG but Verve fills a different role, which is to be the home for people that are eclectic and dynamic, and might make different kinds of records. It’s great for Jon to have a home base, which Verve can be, and then we can plug into our sister labels. Interscope are our partners and they’ve been a completely central part of the team around 70% of his sales and streams are global.

“To cut through internationally, you still need a team, and real boots on the ground. You need people in those markets navigating the idiosyncrasies of their territory. The aggregate of all that knowledge and effort gives you a global profile.”

“JAMIE KEENTS
President, Verve Records

Jon Batiste
& Verve Records

A flourishing artist label partnership

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