



Jon Batiste

& Verve Records

A flourishing artist label partnership

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 Krents 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 Krents. "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 50% 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 these 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 at 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," Krents 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 NewJeans, one of the biggest K-Pop acts in the world; we're just getting going we feel. There's no substitute 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 next 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 Krents 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 working on the album. Then equally, Jon did a song for a Liam Neeson movie that Republic Records produced last year. He's been able to plug into our branding team who worked with Coca-Cola to make him the face of the Coke Studio programme which has had a massive global marketing campaign. He's been equally able to plug into our sync team, and have his music used in ads for the Gap, etc."

"All of these things have benefited him and many of them would simply not have been possible without the full and diverse set of people, services and expertise that you get with a big record label. "I think that's a lot of our value to Jon. Jon could do a lot of what he does independently, but the global side of it, and the holistic side of the various entities working together at Universal is unique."

Ambach-Caplin ends: "From here musically, we are with him wherever he wants to go. We're there to amplify what he wants to do. I think with someone who's this unique, and this intelligent, that's what you do."

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JAMIE KRENTS
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