

## Donovan Germain : Man of distinction

*August 16, 2015 By Howard Campbell*

As a producer, Donovan Germain has amassed a remarkable record of hit songs and albums by dancehall's elite including Buju Banton, Beres Hammond, Marcia Griffiths and Romain Virgo. Yet, his biggest thrill is not songs on the hit parade. *"The greatest thing for me is seeing an artiste I manage own dem own home. Dat's what special to me,"* he said.

Germain, founder and head of Penthouse Records, is one of a number of entertainment personalities awarded the Order of Distinction (OD) for his contribution to the development of Jamaican music. Fellow producer Winston 'Niney' Holness, musicians Harold Butler, Marjorie Whylie and Ras Michael, and Reggae Sunsplash co-founder Ronnie Burke, will also receive Jamaica's sixth highest honour.

Germain, 63, welcomes the national recognition. *"I appreciate that the government saw it prudent to reward me for my work. I hope it can be an inspiration to younger producers and young people generally,"* he said.

Donovan Germain got into the music business in the late 1970s when he started Germain's Revolutionary Records while living in the United States. Revolutionary Record' released songs by roots singer Joy White and the Mighty Diamonds. Germain launched Penthouse shortly after returning to Jamaica in 1988. The company was pivotal to dancehall music's international appeal in the 1990s when it released countless hits by Buju Banton, Beres Hammond, Marcia Griffiths, Garnet Silk and Wayne Wonder.

The music industry has transformed considerably since the 1990s. The compact disc is obsolete; digital downloads is now the order of the day and global record sales have plummeted. That evolution, Germain told the Sunday Observer, has made the industry 'less financially viable'.

Donovan Germain and his colleagues will receive the OD in October during the annual National Awards and Honours ceremony at King's House.

