



## Germain to 'save music'

Thursday, January 12, 2012 BY HOWARD CAMPBELL

AFTER a relatively slow 2011, producer Donovan Germain says it will be a hectic 2012 for his Penthouse Records. The company plans to release a series of albums during the first quarter of the year.

Albums by durable singer Marcia Griffiths, and emerging acts like Torch, D Major, Shuga (formerly Brown Sugar) and Sherita, are expected to be out by April. Germain points out that it will be more than just servicing the market.

*"We're on a 'save the music campaign', too much almshouse a gwaan inna the business. Wi a try bring some sanity to the business,"* said Germain.

Griffiths began her remarkable career in the 1960s as a rocksteady singer at Studio One and blossomed during the 1970s when she established her solo act and as a member of the I-Threes, Bob Marley's backup group.

She was also a member of Penthouse's camp in the 1990s when the label was one of the most successful in dancehall. Griffiths and Beres Hammond were the 'old heads' for a stable that included rising stars like Buju Banton, Tony Rebel and Wayne Wonder.

Germain points out that Penthouse plans to go back to basics in 2012.

*"Wi want to break new artistes, that's what Penthouse has always been about. There's too much slackness and I think these artistes can bring a little balance"* he explained.

Torch, a singer, hails from Trench Town. He has been at Penthouse for the last five years. Shuga (formerly Brown Sugar) has a larger national profile, having won the 2009 Rising Stars contest. She too has been at Penthouse for some time. Keeping their projects on ice was deliberate, Germain said.

*"It's a matter of artiste development, yuh can't rush an' put out artistes an' they're not prepared for stardom,"* he stated. *"When they're not prepared, they embarrass the industry."*

Marcia Griffiths and Friends will be among the first batch of Penthouse's new releases. On it, Griffiths teams with Buju Banton, Queen Ifrica and the label's current star, 2007 Rising Stars winner Romain Virgo.

Germain and Penthouse broke through in the 1980s with songs by Freddie McGregor (Just Don't Want To Be Lonely) and Heads of Government by the Mighty Diamonds.

The company really took off in the 1990s when it embraced the new wave of dancehall performers like Garnet Silk, Buju Banton, Tony Rebel, Cutty Ranks and Wayne Wonder.

Banton was the most successful, topping local charts with regularity. His tour de force for Penthouse came in 1995 with the album, 'Til Shiloh, widely hailed as one of the finest in reggae history.