

Few record companies in contemporary dancehall can match the track record of **Penthouse Records** which has amassed an impressive catalogue of hit songs and albums. The label celebrates its 25th anniversary this year and CEO/founder **Donovan Germain** has big plans for the milestone. A double CD and documentary detailing **Penthouse's** achievements, will be released.

Although the global downturn in music sales have made running a traditional record company challenging, **Germain** says his passion will not allow him to quit. *"I'm a very positive person. I believe that if we develop good artistes, you can earn through live performances. It's a little difficult now. It's a global thing, not just music alone"* he told Splash.

Reflecting on the company he started in 1988 after returning from living in the United States, **Germain** says he has no regrets. *"I've been all over the world, to places that if I was working a nine-to-five I could never afford to do"* he said.

A former Manning Cup player for **Kingston College**, **Germain** operated a thriving record store in **New York City** for several years.

He started **Penthouse** on the top floor of a building on **Slipe Road, St Andrew**. Its first big hit was ***Chaka On The Move*** by deejay **Chaka Demus** the following year.

The 1990s were fruitful for **Penthouse** which embraced dancehall's digital revolution and scored with numerous hit songs like ***Everyone Falls in Love*** (**Tanto Metro & Devonte**), ***Fresh Vegetable*** (**Tony Rebel**), ***Fire Burning*** (**Marcia Griffiths**), ***Saddest Day of My Life*** (**Wayne Wonder**) and ***Lion heart*** (**Garnet Silk**). It was a decade that also saw the emergence of **Buju Banton**, a gruff-toned singjay who recorded a series of hits for **Penthouse** such as ***Browning***, ***Deportee***, ***Murderer*** and the epic 1995 album ***'Til Shiloh***, which remains the jewel in the label's crown.

Germain guided and managed **Banton's** career for 18 years. Others including **Wonder**, **Rebel**, **Cutty Ranks**, **Sanchez** and **Mad Cobra** figured in the label's remarkable success of the 1990s. Veteran artistes **Beres Hammond** and **Marcia Griffiths** enjoyed career revivals at **Penthouse** during that period.

Its current roster includes promising singer **Romain Virgo**, **Torch**, **Shuga** and **Exco Levi**. **Germain** says one of his biggest achievements is the recording studio and manufacturing plant he opened at **Ballater Avenue** in **St Andrew** in 2006.

A father of three children, **Germain** says he would have loved to see one of them succeed him as head of the studio. They have taken different career paths — lawyer, computer engineer and radiologist. He says he plans to run **Penthouse Records** pretty much the same way he has since 1988. *"Building more music and trying to spot that unique talent."*