



Germain chides artistes, producers for mediocrity

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"Unless the dancehall producers and artistes bring something new to the table and let go of the hip-hop style that they are readily embracing, the music will continue to be in the gutter," is an ominous prediction from veteran music producer/manager Donovan Germain.

The head of Penthouse Records spoke to the Jamaica Observer amid reports from SoundScan (the American company that provides music sales data) that dancehall music floundered in 2012.

Germain believes the genre needs a dynamic leader like 15 years ago when dancehall music made inroads on international charts.

"The biggest part of dancehall was when Dave Kelly played a major part in it. Artistes are straying from being melodious, instead they are deejaying about their bottles of Hennessy, money and bad mind," he said.

Kelly was an engineer at Germain's studio before branching out with his Madhouse label. He conjured dance rhythms like the Pepperseed and Joyride which yielded hits such as Tanya Stephens' Big Things a Gwaan and Sycamore Tree by Lady Saw.

Germain notes that songs on both beats were produced over 15 years ago and are still popular in clubs and dances.

"This is the mindset that these nowadays artistes need to have — that is, to make lasting songs," he said.

Germain challenged defenders of contemporary dancehall to prove him wrong.

"If dancehall is so hot and is being sought after, why aren't the artistes touring and why isn't their music selling?"

Does the man who produced classics like Buju Banton's 'Til Shiloh and Tempted to Touch by Beres Hammond, have any hope for dancehall music in 2013 ?

"Although reggae is not being recognised the way it should in Jamaica, the reggae acts are still touring and the music is still firm. The same can be done with dancehall once there is a turn-around of the musical content," he said.