



Silk wraps the Penthouse

November 22, 2014 - By Brian Bonitto

Music producer **Donovan Germain** believes every generation has a unique artiste. For him, roots singer **Garnet Silk** was the standout of his contemporaries. *"For the short time he was here, he created a tremendous impact on the music. His songs are still current today,"* said **Germain**.

Silk (given name **Garnet Smith**) was part of the roots revival that swept Jamaica during the 1990s. That movement also comprised poet **Yasus Afari**, deejay **Tony Rebel**, singers **Everton Blender**, **Uton Green** and deejay **Kulcha Knox**.

Germain, principal of **Penthouse Records**, said the singer's conviction to his faith helped make his music enduring. *"They weren't the run-of-the-mill songs. **Garnet** really believed in Rastafari and was committed to the faith. It came out in how he ate, how he carried himself and in his music,"* he said.

*"**Garnet** came at a time when slackness was the order of the day. He personally hit out against it in one of his songs **Lion Heart** (1992) when he said 'slackness fi go park',"* **Germain** continued.

He remembers his first encounter with **Silk**, then an aspiring artiste. *"**Tony Rebel** brought him to **Penthouse**, around 1990. He was a deejay at the time who called himself **Bimbo**,"* he said. The producer said he was not impressed with the young entertainer, and sent him home to *"hone his skills"*. *"He came back as the **Garnet Silk** we know. I also became his manager,"* said the producer. *"He was passionate about what he did. Always prepared, and always on time."*

Silk recorded several tracks on the **Penthouse** label. Fifteen were compiled on the **Garnet Silk Collector Series** album and released a year after his death. That set contains some of the artiste's popular hits including **A Man Is Just A Man**, **Complaint**, **Broken Heart** and **Everything I've Got**. **Germain** said he has two unreleased **Garnet Silk** songs which he plans to release at the *"right time"*.

Silk and his mother, **Etiga Gray**, died in a fire at her home in Manchester on December 9, 1994. The producer said he spoke to **Silk** the night before he died. *"We were talking about music. He was into music and just being successful to take care of his family,"* he recalled.

Garnet Silk died before his son, **Garnet Jr**, was born. *"I became **Garnet Silk Jr's** godfather. I took care of him right through high school. **Garnet** would have wanted that,"* he added.