

# **BUSHHOUSE** **MUSIC**

## **GENTLEMAN** **Confidence**

Gentleman truly has every reason to call his new album „Confidence“ and look confidentially ahead to the future. The events of the past two years have long passed every expectation put to the reggae artist from Cologne, Germany, and his previous studio album „Journey To Jah“. And the commercial success of this masterpiece of roots reggae, studied with Jamaican top stars such as Bounty Killer, Capleton, Luciano, Mikey General as well as some of the best reggae producers of the island, was not the only surprise: Gentleman had created some wonderful songs, as the reaction of the audience showed during the following festival performances and tours. „Dem Gone“, „Runaway“, „Leave Us Alone“, „See Dem Coming“, and „Fire Ago Bun Dem“ have a sound to them that makes everyone who knows his way with modern reggae think of these songs as classics of the genre. This is topped by the amazing charisma which the lead vocalist develops on stage, with his voice alternating between smooth and husky, as can be heard on the DVD and double CD „Gentleman And The Far East Band Live“ which was released last year.

Gentleman has set new standards for reggae that apply not only for Germany. „Journey To Jah“ was in the German charts for nearly six months and as a result, Gentleman was awarded the ECHO, the most prestigious German music award. He and the Far East Band, a set of musicians that have risen to be his steady companions in the past two years, have continuously widened their circles as a live act. Whether they played the Roskilde Festival in Denmark or shows in France, Italy, and Scandinavia, Gentleman has proven his international standard as a live performer ever and again. Towards the end of last year, he played at Barrington Levy's Dance All Rock Festival as well as Jamaica's Sting Festival, the biggest one night reggae festival worldwide. In February 2004, Gentleman appeared at the Rebel Salute, Jamaica's biggest roots reggae festival, and he also played the Montreux Jazz Festival – where Dean Fraser, Luciano, Mikey General, and Britain's Deejay veteran Tippa Irie spontaneously came on stage to jam with him – as well as festivals in California's Sierra Nevada and on the Bahamas. That year also brought him his first nominations for international awards. In May, Gentleman was nominated as Best New Reggae Artist at the Martin Awards in New York, where a special focus is put on reggae and world music. And he was nominated in

the same category for the Reggae & Soca Awards in Miami, where interest is placed on the Caribbean influence in music.

The restless fervour with which Gentleman has internalised the culture of Jamaica on the spot has long since turned into a truly authentic piece of self-realization. Gentleman has achieved what no other German artist managed before him: to gain a foothold as an artist on the Caribbean island. For more than ten years now, Tilmann Otto, which is his common name, has been a regular visitor to Jamaica. In the meantime, he leads a close friendship with many Jamaican reggae artists. For his new album "Confidence", Gentleman has deepened the good contacts he already had, but he has also sought out new collaborations, because with every trip to the island, he wants to gain experience and broaden his horizon - to him, the creative process is intricately connected to a never ending process of learning. "Confidence" is the proof that gentleman has managed the trick of repeating to create a masterpiece that leads deep into the roots of reggae. Instead of 15, now there are 20 songs that follow the roots of reggae into the finest ramifications. Every song was lovingly arranged into the smallest detail, and features blubbery bass lines, perfectly placed horn sections, entranced vocal harmonies and fine guitar parts. Guest starring are superstars such as Barrington Levy and Anthony B, old pals such as Daddy Rings and Jack Radics as well as Coco Tea, Ras Shiloh, and Tony Rebel. There is lover's rock deluxe, such as "Weary No More", a duet Gentleman sings with his girlfriend Tamika, or "Unconditional Love" and "Intoxication". As in "Journey To Jah", Gentleman has once again clad his songs into a poetical patois.

The greater part of the recordings, stretching over more than a year, was once again done in Kingston, where Gentleman has made quite a name for himself, as is proven by the cooperation with Barrington Levy. It's not an easy task to convince this giant of reggae to join in a studio session. The greater is the honour that he participated in the resistance hymn "Caan Hold Us Down". In this song, Gentleman's close friend Daddy Rings also took part, already an indispensable duet partner during the previous tours. Anthony B is another hotshot. The master of Africanism displays his tougher side on "Face Off", a mega track of biblical dimensions that has just the same fury which "Fire Ago Bun Dem" had on the previous studio album. But most of all, it is the spirit of roots reggae that breathes through "Confidence".

"Of course it always depends on what approach people have to the spirit", explains Gentleman. "For me, music is the spirit. Music is the manifestation of the spirit. Through music, I have found a means of expressing this. It is extremely important for me that the contents of the songs are thought through, something I am deeply convinced of. Because it is something eternal, something that can not be undone. Those 150,000 kids and older people who have bought the previous record listen to the lyrics. Suddenly

you realise that you have a responsibility not only towards yourself. You have to come to terms with yourself." And this is why "Superior", the first single release produced by the proven German production team Pow Pow and recorded with the Firehouse Crew, is an explicitly political song. In a world of poverty, war, material greed, and global struggle for power, Gentleman appeals for everyone to stop and concentrate on spiritual values. The video for the single was shot in the lion's den, respectively in South Central Los Angeles, where the globetrotter from Cologne spreads his message of a more humane world in the midst of a metropolis ruled by frantic activity and a fascination for glamour.

Gentleman has written many of the lyrics once again with his tried and tested songwriter colleagues Jack Radics and Daddy Rings, plus composing some of the riddims himself, which he recorded with the Far East Band. The dancehall typhoon "New Day", "Caan Hold Us Down", "Rumours", produced by Pow Pow and reminiscent of the Desmond Dekker classic "Shantytown", as well as "Mystic Wind" starring Tony Rebel in a fantastic mood, were all recorded in the German Conny Plank Studios. But there is no noticeable difference to those recordings taped in Jamaica, where the Firehouse Crew would be at the ready for most sessions. Renowned producers such as Bobby Digital, Steven Stanley, Richie Stevens, and Black Scorpio (all of whom already participated on "Journey To Jah") contributed to this album just as much as young, up-and-coming Jamaican producers such as Don Corleone, A.L.T.A.F.A.N., and Calibud who prove once again that Kingston is seething with talents.

Gentleman brought just about everyone he could have wished for to the starting line to make "Confidence" a perfect success. All of the features were organized on a basis of give and take: I'll help out on your record now and you'll join in on mine. Because word of Gentleman's artistry has long since spread on Jamaica. "Dem Gone" is enormously popular there, too. And "Send A Prayer" from the new album is of an equal calibre. After all, the artistic conscience of Gentleman is also based on his deeply rooted belief in God, though he does not burden himself with dogma. What's so wonderful about "Confidence" is that it functions as a creative playground for modern roots, even more obviously and harmoniously so than on the previous album. The result is an absolute classic, the kind that roots reggae legends are made of.

With all the harmonious vibes, the melodic power, and gentle spirit reigning on "Confidence", it is difficult to sort out specific songs. No doubt that "All That You Had" and "After A Storm" are perfect examples with their well-tempered texture and have all it needs to be enlisted in the new roots canon, and they are also guaranteed to become favourites with the audience. No doubt either, that "Confidence" will further strengthen and

establish his high international renown. This is an album where you can sink deep into the vibes and let yourself get carried away. In October, Gentleman will be touring Germany, in November he will play other European countries, and in December he will once again be off to play shows in the Caribbean. With "Confidence", Gentleman holds a trump in hand that symbolizes both tradition and innovation. The triumphal advance of this ambassador of reggae is unstoppable.

July 2004

**2005: Winner of following German awards / national:**

- „Echo“ (biggest TV award) - category: best male artist
- „Komet“ (biggest Music TV award) - category: best male artist
- „1 Live Krone“ (biggest youth radio award) - category: best male artist

„Journey to Jah“ - Gold status for over 150.000 sold units

„Confidence“ - Platinum status for over 200.000 sold units

**Further information:**

[www.journeytojah.com](http://www.journeytojah.com)

[www.fourmusic.com](http://www.fourmusic.com)

[www.bushhousemusic.com](http://www.bushhousemusic.com)

**press photos available for download at:**

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"live" section

**live dates:**

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