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FROM **Beth Stempel**

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SUBJECT **Dennis Brown**

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ARTIST: Dennis Brown

TITLE: The Complete A&M Years

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Attached please find all necessary liner notes and credits for this package.

Beth

Dennis Brown The Complete A&M Years

(CD Booklet)

Original liner notes from *The Prophet Rides Again*

This album is dedicated to the Prophet Gad (Dr. Vernon Carrington), founder and organizer of the 12 Tribes of Israel, which was founded in the island of Jamaica by our beloved prophet, Gadman. Functioning in America, England, Trinidad, Canada and throughout the world, repatriating to Shashamane (Ethiopia): The Promised Land which was given by His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, for the remnant of Israel.

Long live the Prophet Gad, and the 12 Tribes of Israel, His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, the Almighty God with any apology.

Bros. (Joseph) Dennis Brown

Special thanks to Mia Simeon, Peter Simeon, Mommy Maggie and my beloved wife, Yvonne Brown, who all accompanied me to Ethiopia, where I developed inspiration of my true being and purpose in Jah World.

Also, special thanks to the brothers and sisters from the 12 Tribes of Israel who are now living in Shashamane (Ethiopia).

He's been given the epithet the "Crown Prince of Reggae," because he is often ranked internationally as the second artist after Bob Marley. Yet in his day, the singer was more popular than Marley, both in Jamaica and among a committed hardcore of reggae fans abroad; as deejay Daddy Ernie of London's Choice FM astutely remarked, the media favorite was Marley, but the people's favorite was always Dennis Brown. And whether we consider him Prince, King, or any other title, Brown's achievements were truly incredible, and his career is one of the most exceptional in the history of Jamaican popular music.

Dennis Emanuel Brown was born in Kingston in 1957. His father, Arthur, was a popular actor of some social standing and his brother, Basil, also pursued a career in the dramatic arts, but Dennis was raised by his mother in a tenement yard in the ghetto—cramped and basic quarters on Orange Lane, a slum dwelling in the very heart of the capital. He began his singing career as a child star following in the footsteps of Delroy Wilson and Errol Dunkley: in 1966, at the age of nine, he appeared at the West Kingston Charity Ball at the National Arena, and supported international stars Miriam Makeba and Adam Wade shortly after, back by the Dragonaires band. As the new reggae sound was gaining ground in Jamaica, Brown gained further live experience in the Falcons, a prominent show band playing the hotel circuit and high society venues; the group also included fellow vocalists Pat Satchmo, Cynthia Richards and Noel Brown, the latter a future member of the Chosen Few. With the Falcons, Dennis appeared at the "Smashville 68" concert with King Curtis, Johnny Nash and the Sweet Inspirations.

Despite his youth, Dennis Brown had an incredibly rich vocal tone and an outstanding style of delivery. He mastered the art of vibrato early on, and was a perceptive songwriter from the start. His first recordings, cut in 1969, were for veteran singer and producer Derrick Harriott, but

Coxsone Dodd at Studio One issued his first releases. “I’m the first one who recorded Dennis Brown,” Harriott proudly recalls, “the song was ‘Lips Of Wine,’ but it was called ‘Obsession’ before. Around the same time he did ‘Changing Times’ for me, the original was Roman Stewart and Dave Robinson. Dennis used to rehearse at the back of my shop at King Street with Junior Murvin and sometimes Horace Andy. I brought back [the Van Dykes’] ‘No Man Is An Island’ from America, teach Dennis Brown the words and everything, but I left to America for a little while and when I came back, he went and did it for Coxsone.”

“No Man Is An Island,” Brown’s first hit, marked the start of a brief but fruitful period at Studio One that resulted in the singer’s first two albums, *No Man Is An Island* and *If I Follow My Heart*. As Dodd recalls, “A good friend of mine by the name of Matt Armstrong had a dance band; the name of the band was the Falcons, and Dennis Brown was one of the vocalists in the band. Matt Armstrong brought him for an audition, and I was so pleased with his voice that I recorded him the next day. I liked the texture of his voice: he is very mellow, and his delivery is solid.” Though the sets hinted at the greater fame to come, the preponderance of ballads and cover tunes did not really make clear the versatility and gravity the singer was capable of utilizing, despite weighty numbers such as “Easy Take It Easy,” “Make It Easy On Yourself” and “Macabee Version” that the singer cut at Studio One.

Around the time that “No Man Is An Island” was causing commotion in Jamaica, Brown was drafted in as lead vocalist with the Soul Syndicate, a grassroots group based in the Greenwich Farm ghetto, replacing Donovan Carless (who had formerly been the harmony singer of the recording duo the Little Roys). Brown helped the Syndicate become one of the leading entities on the live performance circuit through his versatile abilities, harnessing a rawer vocal sound as well as the sentimental ballads that had been Carless’ staples. He cut a series of wonderful solo singles for a variety of producers in 1971-72, including a spirited version of Carole King’s “It’s Too Late” for Herman Chin-Loy; the plaintive ballad “Some Day Soon” for Prince Buster; the heartfelt “Don’t You Cry” for Alvin “GG” Ranglin; the chart-topping “Baby Don’t Do It” and the emotive “Thing In Life” for Lloyd “The Matador” Daley; the spine-chilling “Cheater” and blissfully harmonic “Meet Me At The Corner” for Randy’s; an exquisite cover of “Black Magic Woman” (backed by Soul Syndicate), the wonderful “Let Love In” and excellent “What About The Half” for Phil Pratt; the meditative “In Their Own Way” for Augustus “Gussie” Clarke and the hit-wise, original cut of “Money In My Pocket” for Joe Gibbs. Though he continued to cut discerning and individual cover versions of pop hits, such as his joyous rendition of Glenn Campbell’s “Wichita Lineman” and soul staples like “Silhouettes” and “Let Me Down Easy,” he began focusing on socially conscious material; songs like “Concentration,” “He Can’t Spell” and “Changing Times” from the *Super Reggae And Soul Hits* album all gave evidence of a new maturity.

In 1973, upcoming producer Niney the Observer’s command of Soul Syndicate at Joe Gibbs’ studio was changing the face of reggae, and Dennis’ link with Niney brought forth an intense series of hits and a lasting collaboration; the first was “Westbound Train,” placed on a rhythm inspired by Al Green’s “Love And Happiness.” As Niney recalls, “When I was working with Bunny Lee, me and Slim Smith used to write songs at this yard up Orange Street, the same place Dennis Brown born, and we meet Dennis as a likkle youth who want to sing, but Dennis was so likkle that we couldn’t bring him in the camp; Slim Smith take him down to Derrick Harriott and he make a headway, then I think Alton Ellis take him up to Coxsone. After I do ‘Silver Words’ [with Ken Boothe], my name start to

call differently; I in a different league. I meet Dennis Brown and we say we want to work, then me and him start to move so close that the two of us live together in one house up Pembroke Hall. Me and Dennis start to go to party and dances, and we drive uptown one night to New Kingston and I hear a song play, Al Green's 'Love And Happiness.' After I drop him home, it was four o'clock in the morning and I never go and sleep, I just go to [guitarist] Chinna and [bassist] Fully, wake them up and say, 'I'm going to run a session tomorrow,' because they play for Joe Gibbs every Sunday, and me operate Joe Gibbs' session every Sunday. As they come, I lick the song first; Joe Gibbs was the engineer, a very good engineer in those days. I did bring Dennis round there to do an album for Joe Gibbs, and Joe Gibbs said, 'I want a cut of this song to put on the album,' so from there, me and Dennis very tight. It's all a new vibe, because this is the first me and Dennis working; before the first song come out, I know it was a hit."

Niney recalls that Dennis experienced some serious health problems in this period, but even that could not stop his meteoric rise. "One day we go to the beach and we drive in town, on Orange Street and North Street, and it's right at that corner he born and grow, so he decide to take a trip at his home; he have a little cough, and he said, 'Come here Skipper, I cough and spit blood.' I take him to a chest clinic and they say I must take him to the hospital—a lungs problem. He in the hospital for four or five months, and meanwhile the song becomes number one; we need the follow-up, so I take him out of the hospital one night, take him to Randy's, and we do 'Cassandra' at four o'clock in the morning. From there, we have that relationship coming down."

In this same period, Dennis issued his first self-produced work on D'Aguilar Sounds. But the bulk of his work was created in conjunction with Niney, with whom he worked solidly to the 1977 set *Wolf And Leopards*. By the time they parted company, Dennis had already set up his DEB Music label as an outlet for some of his most challenging material, and also a vehicle for some of the more interesting "lover's rock" acts in England, such as 15-16-17, as well as some of the hardest Jamaican roots from the likes of Black Uhuru, Junior Delgado and Earl Cunningham. From 1978, Brown became more concretely aligned with the "Mighty Two," the production team of Joe Gibbs and engineer Errol Thompson in Kingston. Another series of hits and classic albums followed, with a "rockers"-style cover of the Sharks' broken-hearted "How Can I Leave" reigning high in the Jamaican charts in 1978, followed by spirited re-makes of Alton Ellis' "Ain't That Loving You" and "Girl I've Got A Date," plus the Paragons' "Man Next Door." But the one to exceed all expectations was the extended re-cut of Brown's own "Money In My Pocket," which entered the UK pop charts in early 1979. Its prolonged success scored the singer a UK contract with WEA, whose wide distribution network helped introduce Dennis' work to a broader audience.

This growing fame brought Dennis into a different dimension when Joe Gibbs brokered the singer a deal with the American giant A&M in 1980, resulting in three albums with a strongly internationalized sound, all included on this current anthology. The first, *Foul Play*, has some truly classic D. Brown material. "The Existence Of Jah," "I Need Your Love (Rasta Children)" and "The World Is Troubled" retain all the complex gravity of the singer's greatest works, while the popular "Your Man" is another of the many songs he's cut that are still guaranteed to fill a dance floor. Contemporary re-cuts of "If I Follow My Heart" and "The Cheater" held the conviction of their originals, while "If I Had The World" is a love song in keeping with Dennis' previous standards. The more commercially-oriented tracks on the disc betray the influence of multi-talented musician Clive "Lizard" Hunt, who first linked with Dennis way back in 1972, when he provided flute on

“Concentration”; his compositions “On The Rocks” and “Come On Baby” are reaching towards other shores, though both retain a Jamaican sensibility in their lyrics. The title track, reputedly written by Gibbs, is Brown at his resolutely funkier.

Love Has Found Its Way, the follow-up album, has a similar balance in terms of composition, though its Miami remix gives a slightly glossier feel. Thus, “Handwriting On The Wall,” “Weep & Moan,” “Blood, Sweat And Tears,” “Halfway Up, Halfway Down” and “Get Up” are all direct political statements about the volatile state of our world. On more commercial ground is a danceable remake of Burt Bacharach’s “Any Day Now” and the funky “Get High On Your Love,” while the classic title track, co-written by Dennis’ wife Yvonne, and “Why Baby Why,” written by guitarist and arranger Willie Lindo, are among Brown’s best love songs.

The Prophet Rides Again, Dennis’ last for A&M, has the most noticeable musical difference. Half the tracks used slick session players from outside the reggae scene, landing side one of the original vinyl LP fully in the hard funk and soft soul zones; “Out Of The Funk,” “Jammin’ My Way To Fame,” “Save A Little Love For Me,” “Wonders Of The World” and “Too Hot” are easily the most commercial tracks of Dennis’ entire career. Side two, however, places us back on more solid ground, with Gibbs’ standard session crew backing the man. The title track, “Historical Places” and “Shashamane Living” signal Brown’s commitment to the 12 Tribes branch of the Rastafari faith; the former is in praise of Vernon Carrington, *aka* the Prophet Gad, founder of the movement, while the latter two reference Dennis’ trip to Shashamane, the piece of land in Ethiopia granted to Rastafari settlers by Selassie. “This Love Of Mine” is another fine D. Brown meditation on the nature of love, while the climax of “Storms Are Raging” again warns of coming retribution.

In the uncertain aftermath following Bob Marley’s death, Dennis Brown’s deal with A&M was supposed to make him reggae’s heir apparent. Yet despite his great talent, the international conquest did not really take place as planned. And as is alluded to on some of the songs collected here, the A&M years brought some negativity. On “If I Had The World,” Dennis sings that “You drive away the pains from me, sometimes you’re like cocaine, baby”; on “Get High On Your Love,” he repeatedly states “Some get high on cocaine.” Alas, such numbers reference the actual presence of the assiduous white powder in his life, a presence that would ultimately contribute to his premature demise.

When he split from Joe Gibbs and A&M, Dennis Brown drew back to his raw roots, working with a number of prominent producers and also issuing individual works on his Yvonne’s Special label. He scored the top-notch anthem “Revolution” with Sly and Robbie and followed it with strong work for Prince Jammy, Gussie Clarke and others. Right to the end, Dennis Brown’s standards never dropped. But during an ill-fated tour of Brazil in 1999, his health began to rapidly decline, and a weakened immune system meant he was unable to survive.

The songs collected here show Dennis at his most international, and highlight his versatile skill in being able to approach commerciality with a human face. It is culled from one of the many peaks of a career defined by excellence. And though Dennis Brown is no longer with us, his musical creations will always live on.

– David Katz

David Katz is author of People Funny Boy: The Genius of Lee Scratch Perry (Canongate) and Solid Foundation: An Oral History of Reggae (Bloomsbury).

Dennis Brown

The Complete A&M Years

(CD Booklet)

Disc One

1. On The Rocks
(Clive Hunt)
2. The Existence Of Jah
(Dennis Brown)
3. Come On Baby
(Clive Hunt)
4. The World is Troubled
(Dennis Brown)
5. I Need Your Love (Rasta Children)
(Dennis Brown)
6. Foul Play
(Joel Gibson)
7. Your Man
(Dennis Brown)
8. If I Had The World
(Dennis Brown)
9. If I Follow My Heart
(Dennis Brown)
10. The Cheater
(Dennis Brown)
11. Love Has Found Its Way
(Dennis Brown - Yvonne Brown)
12. Get High On Your Love
(Joel Gibson - Dennis Brown)
13. Handwriting On The Wall
(Joel Gibson - Linda Thompson)
14. Weep & Moan
(Joel Gibson)

15. Blood, Sweat And Tears
(Joel Gibson)

Disc Two

1. Halfway Up, Halfway Down
(Linda Thompson)
2. Any Day Now
(Bob Hilliard - Burt Bacharach)
3. I Couldn't Stand Losing You
(Dennis Brown)
4. Why Baby Why
(Willie Lindo)
5. Get Up
(Dennis Brown)
6. Out Of The Funk
(Noel Williams)
7. Jammin' My Way To Fame
(Joel Gibson)
8. Save A Little Love For Me
(Dennis Brown)
9. Wonders Of The World
(Joel Gibson)
10. Too Hot
(Joel Gibson)
11. The Prophet Rides Again
(Dennis Brown)
12. Historical Places (Ethiopia)
(Dennis Brown)
13. This Love Of Mine
(Dennis Brown)
14. Shashamane Living (Country Living)
(Dennis Brown)

15. Storms Are Raging
(Dennis Brown)

Disc One, Tracks 1 - 10 originally released as *Foul Play*, A&M SP-4850, Feb 20, 1981

Produced by Joe Gibbs and Clive Hunt

Executive Producer: Larry Maxwell

Arranged by Clive Hunt

Music by The Professionals

Drums: Lowell "Sly" Dunbar & Devon / Bass: Lloyd Parks & Robbie Shakespeare / Horns: Dean Fraser (sax), David Madden (trumpet), Ronald "Nambo" Robinson (trombone) / Lead guitar: Willie Lindo / Rhythm guitar: Noel Bailey / Keyboards: Clive Hunt, Franklyn "Bubbler" Waul, Robert Lyn / Percussion: Ruddy Thomas & Uziah "Sticky" Thompson / Background vocals: The Professionals

Recorded and Mixed at Joe Gibbs Recording Studio, Kingston, Jamaica

Engineered and Mixed by Errol "E.T." Thompson

Original album art direction: Chuck Beeson

Original album photography: Aaron Rapoport

Disc One, Tracks 11 - 15, and Disc Two, Tracks 1- 5 originally released as *Love Has Found Its Way*, A&M SP-4886, April 6, 1982

Produced by Joe Gibbs and Willie Lindo

Co-produced by Dennis Brown

Executive Producer: Larry Maxwell

Arranger: Willie Lindo

Recorded at Joe Gibbs Recording Studio, Kingston, Jamaica

Engineer: Errol "E.T." Thompson

Remixed at Quad Radio and Miami Sounds

Remix Engineer: Errol "E.T." Thompson

Assisted by Peter Th and P. Khouri

Bass: Lloyd Parks, Bagga & Val Douglas / Lead guitar: Willie Lindo / Rhythm guitar: Winston "BoPeep" Bowen / Drums: Lowell "Sly" Dunbar & Donavon Richardson / Piano: Franklyn "Bubbler" Waul / Synthesizer: Peter Ashburn / Organ: Winston Wright / Percussion: Daniel Z. / Saxophone: Dean Fraser / Trumpet: Chico / Trombone: Ronald "Nambo" Robinson / Background vocals: Pam Hall, Cynthia Slash & Dawn Forester

Original album art direction: Chuck Beeson

Original album design: Larry Vigon

Original album illustration: Lou Beach

Disc Two, Tracks 6 - 15 original released as *The Prophet Rides Again*, A&M SP-4964, July 12, 1983

Produced by Joe Gibbs

Co-Produced by Dennis Brown & Errol Thompson

Recorded at Joe Gibbs Recording Studio, Kingston, Jamaica; Miami Sound and Sunshine Sound

Engineered by Errol "E.T." Thompson, Ron Taylor and Carlos Granado ("Out of the Funk")

Mixed by Joe Gibbs and Errol "E.T." Thompson at Joe Gibbs Recording Studio, Kingston, Jamaica

Tracks 11 - 15 Arranged by Joe Gibbs, Dennis Brown and Errol Thompson
Tracks 7 - 10 Arranged by Jessie Butler
Track 6 Arranged and Co-Produced by Noel Williams

Musicians on tracks 11 - 15: Joe Gibbs and The Professionals

Musicians on tracks 6 - 10: Jesse Bulter: keyboards / Stephen Argy: bass / Gary King: guitar / Embridge Jones: keyboards & synthesizers / Daniel Zebulon: percussion / Bret Murphey, Eric White, Kenneth Faulk & Whit Sidener: horns / Beverly Champion, Jody Mirisula & Carol Mascaro: background vocals

Original album art direction: Chuck Beeson
Original album design: Melanie Nissen
Original album photography: Norman Seeff

Reissue credits

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Master tape research: Brendan Morris, Universal Music Group Tape Facility West, Universal City, CA
Editorial & factual assistance: David Katz
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Legal clearance: Kelly Martinez

Art direction: Vartan
Design:
Photo research: Ryan Null
Photographs: Norman Seeff
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Thanks to Kennedy Mensah at Westbury Music Ltd.

Also Available by Dennis Brown:

Absolutely The Best 1957-1999 (3302 061 119-2)
Cosmic Force (116 617 745-2)
In Dub (116 617 739-2)
Tribulation (116 617 731-2)
Ultimate Collection (314 545 230-2)

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Dennis Brown
The Complete A&M Years
(CD Labels)

Disc One

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2. The Existence of Jah
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4. The World is Troubled
5. I Need Your Love (Rasta Children)
6. Foul Play
7. Your Man
8. If I Had The World
9. If I Follow My Heart
10. The Cheater
11. Love Has Found Its Way
12. Get High On Your Love
13. Handwriting On The Wall
14. Weep & Moan
15. Blood, Sweat And Tears

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© © 2003 A&M Records. B0000348-02 Disc One

Dennis Brown
The Complete A&M Years

Disc Two

1. Halfway Up, Halfway Down
2. Any Day Now
3. I Couldn't Stand Losing You
4. Why Baby Why
5. Get Up
6. Out Of The Funk
7. Jammin' My Way To Fame
8. Save A Little Love For Me
9. Wonders Of The World
10. Too Hot
11. The Prophet Rides Again
12. Historical Places (Ethiopia)
13. This Love Of Mine
14. Shashamane Living (Country Living)
15. Storms Are Raging

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© © 2003 A&M Records. B0000348-02 Disc Two

(CD Spine)

A&M Records logo Dennis Brown The Complete A&M Years B0000348-02

(CD Inlay)

**Dennis Brown
The Complete A&M Years**

Disc One

1. On The Rocks
2. The Existence of Jah
3. Come On Baby
4. The World is Troubled
5. I Need Your Love (Rasta Children)
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Foul Play, Love Has Found Its Way &
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30 songs including
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