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**ROYAL STUDIOS CELEBRATES AS MARK RONSON + BRUNO MARS SMASH
“UPTOWN FUNK” HITS NO. 1 ON BILLBOARD CHART
*First No. 1 pop hit recorded in Memphis since 1982***

(MEMPHIS, TN) – The nation is dancing to Mark Ronson and Bruno Mars as “Uptown Funk” spends its second week perched atop the Billboard Hot 100, but Memphians especially should be turning it up and getting down: the track was recorded by Boo Mitchell at the legendary Royal Studios.

“Uptown Funk” is the first No. 1 pop hit to come out of a Memphis studio since 1976 (Rick Dees’ “Disco Duck”) and the first from Royal Studios since 1972 (Al Green’s “Let’s Stay Together). Ronson recorded the bulk of his entire *Uptown Special* album at Royal after stumbling upon the studio during a scouting trip with producer Jeff Bhasker.

“Mark and Jeff were on a tour through the south looking for talent,” Mitchell explains. “They came to the studio to hear some singers and when they came in, Mark was like ‘Oh, man. We have to record here. That was in February of 2014, and they were back in March for the first session.”

Bruno Mars laid down vocals for “Uptown Funk” in May, and additional sessions for the record brought in Kevin Parker (Tame Impala), Trombone Shorty and Mystikal. Those notable names are just the latest in a growing list of artists who’ve chosen to record with Mitchell at Royal Studios since 2012 – including Elton John, Keith Richards, Robert Plant, Keb Mo, Emile Haynie, Snoop Dogg, Robert Randolph and more – and much of it has happened as Mitchell tours the country and the world promoting *Take Me to the River*, the SXSW Audience Award-winning Memphis music documentary that he co-produced with North MS All-Stars’ Cody Dickinson.

Still, he points to *Uptown Special* as a highlight of the last few years – if not of his career.

“Mark Ronson’s album is to music what *Pulp Fiction* was to movies,” Mitchell says. “Mark’s style reminds me of how my father worked: very specific, knows what he wants and has an amazing set of ears. And Jeff Bhasker, too – he’s just a melodic genius.”

In “Uptown Funk”’s second week at No. 1 on the Hot 100, it also rises 2-1 on both the Streaming Songs and On-Demand Songs charts, “further solidifying its spot atop the Hot 100,” according to Billboard. Ronson’s *Uptown Special* album released yesterday and is expected to debut high on next week’s Billboard 200 album chart.

For Mitchell, the momentum has been building since 2012, when the sessions for *Take Me to the River* brought Snoop Dogg and Terrence Howard to Royal Studios. Mitchell wonders if it's not a sign of the industry's recognition that the torch has been passed – and passed well.

"I just think that the word is getting out," he says. "So many people, when they thought of Royal, they thought of my dad. They thought of Willie Mitchell, and they didn't know anything about me. And once I started recording notable people by myself, the word got out that Willie's son is there, he's taking up the reigns and following in the footsteps of his father. People feel comfortable coming here and they feel like they're in good hands."

The continued success of "Uptown Funk" guarantees that the word is out – No. 1 hits are still born in Memphis, Tennessee.

ABOUT ROYAL STUDIOS

Constructed as a theater in 1915 and converted into Royal Studios in 1957, Royal Studios, home of Hi Records and the Hi Rhythm Section, grew from a minor rockabilly studio into one of the most successful producers of soul music worldwide. Joe Coughi, a local musical entrepreneur, rented the building for sixty dollars a month and with partners Quinton Claunch and John Novarese converted the Royal Theater into the Royal Recording Studio, home of Hi Records. Soon after Hi Records inception in 1956, it became known as the "House of Instrumentals." Its early success producing instrumentals hits such as the Bill Black Combo's "Smokey, Part 2," "Josephine," "White Silver Sands," and "Don't Be Cruel," all million sellers, earned Hi this recognition. Each recording was a million seller. Under Willie Mitchell, the musical direction of Hi changed significantly from rockabilly to R&B as Mitchell helped fashion the modern Memphis' soul sound. Mitchell signed with Hi in 1963 as a session trumpeter. As a musician he had mild personal success with "20-75" before hitting big with "Buster Browne" (#29, 1965) and "Bad Eye" (#23, 1966). The pinnacle of Mitchell's personal recording career was in 1968 with "Soul Serenade" (#10). After Hi president Joe Coughi's death in 1969, Mitchell took on more production and administrative duties and soon his own recording career was eclipsed by his genius as producer of one of the most influential singers of the 1970's, Al Green. In the early 1970's, producer Mitchell pioneered a Memphis soul sound which scaled heights of elegant spirituality and musicianship as well as popularity. For the next four years Green and Mitchell had a number one hit each year. The ethereal combination of Mitchell's refined production and Green's spiritual vocal gymnastics paid off not only aesthetically but financially as well. In his career with Hi, Al Green would sell more than 20 million records. Hi and Mitchell produced other known artists including Ann Peebles ("Part Time Love" 1972, #7 R&B, and "I Can't Stand the Rain" 1973, #6 R&B), Don Bryant ("Don't Turn Your Back On Me"), George Jackson ("Aretha Sing One For Me"), Ace Cannon ("Tuff"), and Bobby Blue Bland's highly influential album, "A Touch of the Blues." Hi Records remains the last great success of Memphis soul music to be recognized worldwide—at least at current writing and Al Green is one of the most popular and successful recording artists in Memphis music history since Elvis Presley. Willie Mitchell's Royal Studios is one of the oldest perpetually operated recording studios in the world and continues to host gold and platinum selling artists.

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