

VANITY FAIR

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— | *Spotlight* | —

IN THE BREAKOUT LANE

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espite what viewers may have thought after the 58th annual Grammy Awards, soloists Leon Bridges and Andra Day (who were both up for best R&B album) did not materialize out of nowhere. Since the release of their debut albums, last summer—*Coming Home* and *Cheers to the Fall*, respectively—Bridges, 26, and Day, 31, have taken their electrifying acts from local dive bars to international headlining tours. Their ascent has been a noble feat for emerging artists with such a well-rounded and intensely nostalgic vibe, reminiscent of the bygone legends they so deftly borrow from. “I want to go back to the roots, to where it all started,” says Bridges, listing idols such as Arthur Alexander and Sam Cooke. “I want to honor and keep my heritage alive in whatever way I can.”

The breakout musicians first met at the Celebration of Music in Film event during the 2015 Sundance Film Festival. With their evident commitment to what Day calls “full music”—which she describes as “jazz at its core, with soul, blues, rock, and pop piled on top”—it’s no wonder they found kinship through their distinct style and sound. “I think fashion and artistry go hand in hand,” says Day, who, like Bridges, dresses the part of a sharp showman from a more frivolous era. “The visuals are equally as important as the music. It’s all a complete experience.”

While neither singer went home with a golden gramophone in February—Day was also nominated for best R&B performance for her inspirational single “Rise Up”—there’s no doubt we’ll be hearing a lot more from them. Their imaginative perspectives have led to an ideal partnership, and, this month, Day will join Bridges on his global tour. —MAXWELL LOSGAR

PHOTOGRAPH BY JASON BELL



Leon Bridges and Andra Day, photographed at Amoeba Music in Los Angeles.

BRIDGES WEARS CLOTHING BY CANALI; SHOES BY TOD'S; SOCKS BY PANTHERELLA. DAY WEARS A DRESS AND EARRINGS BY MARC JACOBS; SHOES BY GUCCI; BRACELETS BY ARME DE L'AMOUR AND PAULA MENDOZA.