

Tank and the Bangas explore the most tender and true parts of life's journey. Unique and with a vibrance that could only come from New Orleans, the lead vocalist, Tank has stretched her vocals over quirky raps, poetry, and rich melodies since the release of their first album, *Think Tank* in 2013. Four years later, they had a viral breakthrough as the winners of the NPR Tiny Desk Contest — an eclectic performance that has since been praised by musicians like Miguel and Anthony Hamilton and has now amassed over 14 million views on YouTube. Now, Tank and the Bangas arrive with a new 3-part album *The Heart, The Mind, and The Soul*. With this offering, Tank opens up about the wisdom she's gained from new beginnings, endings, and in-betweens.

The concept of an album series came to Tank two years ago while traveling on a train with her group members. Its structure makes it different from the rest of the catalog, and so does the special emphasis Tank has put on her poetry, collaborators, and its cohesive sound. "It explores self-discovery, the journey to confidence, believing in your ability, matters of the heart, the mind, and just free thought flowing," Tank says about the album.

On *The Heart*, the first part to be released and produced by James Poyser, Tank flows back and forth between poetry and a velvety alto that deepens every thoughtful word as she riffs about her deepest sentiments on life. The opening track, "A Poem Is" boasts a feature from Jill Scott — an appearance that Tank is thrilled about especially because her mission with this release is to magnify poetry as a music genre.

"I want for poetry to get that much more respect and for even more young people to get into the expression of poetry," Tank expresses. "I want it to be seen as even more cool again."

Tank has always considered herself a poet first, but at the start of her career, she used singing to draw listeners into her music. This album is a return to that first love and one we can hear on "Open to Thy Self," a song Tank penned in a cottage in The Netherlands and a standout track that gives us a look into her gentle inner monologue as she gives herself unconditional self-love through all of her phases.

Tank created a different soundscape with each collaborator for each part of the project. Producer Iman Omari, known for his lo-fi dreamy loops, paid attention to every detail of each beat and brought out a more "vibey" side of Tank on *The Mind*. She built *The Soul* with producer and jazz musician Robert Glasper, who led free-formed recording sessions that made room for Tank to discover the melodies and let ideas flow.

Out of all the music, she feels especially drawn to a song co-produced by Kaidi Tatham, called "This Black Girl." It's a self-proclamation of the beauty and transformative power of black woman/girlhood — along with the realities of combating the privilege of white women and misogyny. "I think it's one of the best poems in history. Yeah, I said it," Tank says.

With *The Heart, The Mind, and The Soul*, Tank and the Bangas affirm the thoughts, feelings, and complexities of these key parts of self. "I'm writing about my experience and feeling more open, free, and *much* more confident," Tank says. "Before, even though I had such a big voice, sometimes I felt quieted. It feels good to stretch on my own terms."

### CONDENSED VERSION

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