

Within the span of a few years, Alan Lili, Amari Jordan, and Jaime Mora went from international strangers to close-knit family. With music as their mother tongue, the three members of *tulengua* aim to be a vessel for shared humanity and connection across divides.

*tulengua* was born in 2017 from a conversation between Alan Lili and Slack Barrett. This happened at a time when the US/Mexico border and immigration were hotly debated by government figures on mainstream media. Feeling the divisive force their words were having on the people who actually live in the border region, Alan wanted to create a band that could represent the unity of both sides. Alan was born in Mexico City, grew up in San Diego, and has roots in far-off places, so borders never made much sense to him. With the intention of creating bilingual music that would foster a greater sense of community and collaboration across borders, *tulengua* was founded.

Alan started making beats for him and Slack to trade Spanish and English verses on, with the goal of finding more musicians to round out the band. During this early period, Slack left the group and moved back to the East Coast while Alan continued scouting the border region for musical soul mates. Eventually, after a revolving cast of musicians came through the *lengua* doors, the golden line-up was solidified.

Alan met Amari at a Wu Tang rap battle, where Amari almost dethroned the reigning champ. This was her first battle ever. Alan was very impressed, to say the least. He introduced himself while she waited in line for the bathroom and the rest is history. One song turned into plenty and now Alan is the godfather of Amari's son.

Amari grew up in San Diego, where she had been pursuing music as a solo artist from an early age. She was raised by her grandma and spent her childhood listening to artists like Third Eye Blind and Prince. Though she is a one woman powerhouse who can produce, play guitar, and write all own songs, Amari had been searching for a project that represented something bigger than herself.

Jimmy was born in Tijuana and raised Rosarito, where he honed his multi-instrumental skills playing at home with his brothers. Before joining *tulengua*, he was quietly making beats from his bedroom in Rosarito. He did it for himself and himself only. Those beats were the soundtrack to his days. His niece heard them, and she encouraged him to upload them to Soundcloud. Jimmy finally agreed and hashtagged them with #tijuana. One day, Alan decided to try his luck at finding more producers online, and after a #tijuana search, he found Jimmy. He drove to Rosarito on a whim a few

months later and the sparks flew. One sesh turned into plenty and here we are.

Nowadays, the three members of tulengua consider themselves family. They all write and produce together, finding inspiration in each other's uniqueness. Since 2017, they've been written up in Vice, Playboy, NPR, and Konbini. Their music has been nominated for album of the year at the San Diego Music Awards, and they've been interviewed on KPBS, NBC, and KPBS.

They've opened for bands like Molotov and Las Cafeteras, and been invited to play for audiences in Tulum, Mexico and across the US.

In Summer of 2023, tulengua signed to South Mountain Music and ADA Latin for distribution. With the start of this new chapter, tulengua is excited to become even more borderless and bring their music to new audiences all over the globe.