

BY DANIELLE AVRAM

BREATHTAKING INCLUSIVITY

SOLUNA INTERNATIONAL MUSIC & ARTS FESTIVAL ENRAPTURES WITH DIVERSITY.

Now in its fourth year, SOLUNA, Dallas's annual international music and art festival, is breaking even further from the confines of "traditional" music, art, and performance, incorporating a bevy of new locations and collaborations. From the glossy interior of NorthPark Center to an ice-covered parking lot in South Dallas, from female mariachis to an army of dancers and drummers, the festival is aiming for new levels of inclusivity and experimentation. Anchored by the final performances of Dallas Symphony Orchestra conductor Jaap van Zweden, this year's SOLUNA is sure to be a spectacle unlike any other.

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Jen Ray in her studio. Photograph courtesy of Ed Marshall Photography, NYC.



JEN RAY AND SARAH JAFFE: EYES AS BRIGHT AS DIAMONDS

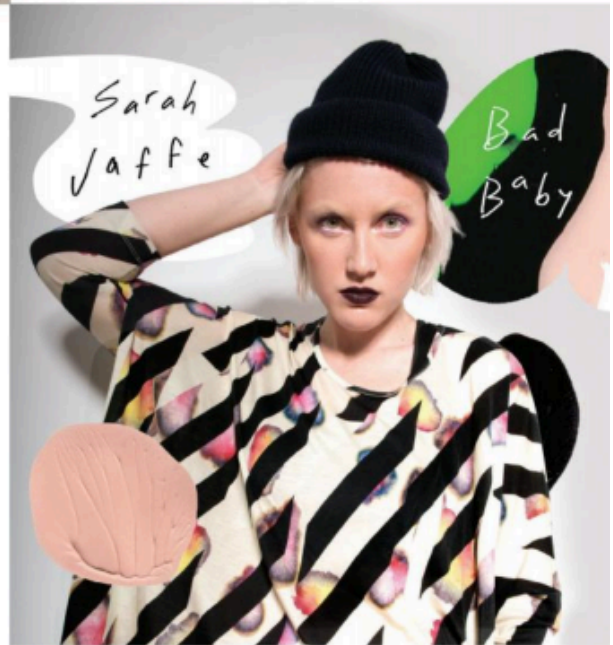
On April 11, North Texas musician Sarah Jaffe partners with visual artist Jen Ray in the world premiere of *Eyes as Bright as Diamonds*. Featuring Jaffe and a squad of female performers from Booker T. Washington High School, Haltom High School, and Southern Methodist University, the performance blends music and vocals with tap and ballroom dancers, a drumline, and a color guard, to create a larger-than-life spectacle on the radial staircase of the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center lobby.

Known for her fantastical images of beautifully savage women—futuristic warriors in a male-less world—the formerly Berlin-based Ray has long used live performance to break her characters out of their two-dimensional habitats. Featuring women in various states of dress and undress, Ray’s characters are brazen and unapologetic: militantly anarchistic, fishnet-wearing, axe-wielding huntresses that are the very embodiment of the phrase, “smash the patriarchy.”

Ray’s performances often revolve around a central figure that rallies her troops with a vocal call to arms, and Jaffe occupies this role in *Eyes as Bright as Diamonds*, rounding out Ray’s visuals with her chameleonic style.

“As the project came into focus, I knew that the key element would be the female singer,” said Ray. “When Sarah and I met, we knew she would be the perfect fit. She has been an amazing collaborator, helping to shape the work with her music and staging.”

Jaffe describes the experience of crafting the performance as empowering, stating, “Outside of creating in the studio, I get my deepest fulfillment through collaboration, and this is like collaboration on ecstasy. In short, this is a group of bad ass women all coming together to help Jen’s vision for this project come into fruition.”



Sarah Jaffe, *Bad Baby* album cover © Kirtland Records.
Photograph by Lindsey Byrnes.

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