

# Rocking the West with Russian beat

**A blonde, Beverly Hills brat is bringing underground pop music from Russia with love. Now David Bowie has promised to help Joanna Stingray produce an album that could set the West rockin'.**

By FRANK DURHAM  
**T**HE girl from Beverly Hills climbed into the bath with the Russian rock 'n' roller and they began to sing. Another undercover Red recording session was under way.

Later, the couple gambled round the tourist sights of Leningrad and Moscow, making a zany and warmly affectionate pop video. The fur-hatted Russians strolled past without missing a beat.

Pop was fizzing in the vodka belt. There was rock around the krenalin. The secret rockers had gone out into the cold.

At first, it was all just a bit of fun

in the snow. But now the music and video of underground Russian groups collected by the American girl — codename Joanna Stingray — looks like becoming a very hot property.

And it is getting the backing of the glittering name of David Bowie. He has agreed to help with an album of underground Russian rock, called Red Wave, that Joanna is producing.

And he has hinted he may even introduce the video that goes with the musical work of the four unofficial groups.

She co-wrote most of the songs with her companion of the Russian bath, bandleader Boris Gorebatsky. One of the choruses urges: Make white love under the red sky.

Sitting in her parents' beachside home in the film star ghetto of Malibu Colony, Joanna explained: "That can be taken in many ways. Like the lyrics of Dylan songs."

But she had grown close to Boris, even before they made the soupy I Got You Babe together. And Joanna, a "Beverly Hills brat", has taken many of the other red rockers to her heart as well.

She takes them everything from guitars and "drumsticks to cast-off clothes. In return, she gets rock 'n' roll from Russia with love.

And the four Russian underground bands could revel in the riches of jeans, shirts and musical instruments. With the magic of the Bowie name, Joanna thinks success could be only a drumbeat away. She told me: "A year ago, David Bowie was interested in Boris, and tried to put out one of his albums in Russian."

"He believes, as I do, that it is very important to do it in the Russian language. It makes the point that they're not copying us."

"David was too busy to do the album. But he wrote to me saying that, if I could get it together and put it out, he would help by lending his name to it."

"And he will possibly do other things, too, like an introduction for the video. So people should really take a look at the album."

An independent record label has already agreed to do the Russian rock, which will be on sale in America, Japan, Australia, England and France.

Joanna, a bubbly 25-year-old, with her blonde hair streaked in layers, doesn't think language will be a barrier. She said: "I'm not putting this out because it's Russian, but because I like the music."

"I just happen to be a rock 'n' roller who went to Russia and listened to the music. It could just as well have been New York or London's Soho... anywhere."

"These musicians spoke the same language. Music has no borders." And Joanna, who is doggedly learning Russian, went on to explain why the bands on the album will have universal appeal.

She said: "Boris is the father of rock 'n' roll in Russia. "I met him through a mutual friend when I went on a tourist trip to Russia. The minute we met, we hit it off and became friends. Then, just by sitting and fooling around, we started writing songs together."

"But we've only recorded one song... that's I Got You Babe. The four bands on the album are the most popular in Russia. Boris's is called Aquarium."

"He is a Dylan-type singer, who looks like David Bowie and moves on stage like Mick Jagger. The kids live for every one of his words."

Joanna, who works as a self-employed travel agent when she is not tending the Russian connection went on: "The next band is called Kino which means 'cinema' is Russian. The leader has Korean origins."



**BACK HOME:** Relaxing on the beach close to her parents' Malibu home, Joanna is in another world to her Russian rockers. She and Boris have already recorded "I got you babe" together.

"Then there is Strange Games which is a crazy Madness-type band. They take some of their lyrics from French poetry translated into Russian."

"The newest band who are very popular is called Alisa.... The leader, Koscha, sends the girls wild by the way he moves. The authorities, don't like him and, before one concert told him: "We don't want so much hip shaking from you and changing from the audience."

"It was like the Elvis Story. They were frightened because Koscha's punk music gets people going crazy."

Joanna, too, has had a brush with the Russian authorities. She recalled: "After a concert, a man came up to me and started speaking in Russian."

"I kept walking away, and he kept grabbing my arm and yelling at me. I thought he was K.G.B. and that the best thing to do was to get out of the place."

"As soon as I reached the door, the man said four words in Russian and eight men surrounded me and lifted me up. It was quite embarrassing. "In the end, I told them I wanted

to call the American embassy. They realised they weren't going to get anything out of me, so they let me go."

"When I started walking up the street, I realised they had sent a guy to follow me. I was joined by a friend, who was another foreigner, and we spent an hour walking in circles around Leningrad."

"Every time we turned round, there was this man pretending to look down at the pavement, or up at sign. It was all pretty silly, and reminded me of Walter Matthau's comedy, Hopsotch."

Eventually, Joanna escaped her "tail" and went to join her Russian rock friends.

Her closeness with these is tough for Joanna's American boyfriend, Mark, to like. After all, that chorus of Make white love under a red sky is open to different interpretations.

And that bath scene with Boris was definitely pretty steamy. But there is no stopping Joanna now. She is a girl with a mission. To rock the West with the Russian beat.

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**BUBBLY LADY:** Back in her bedroom, Joanna is modest about her Russian connection — "I just happen to be a rock 'n' roller who went to Russia to listen to the music".