



MAKING A POINT: Joanna Stingray in Red Square, and her bands: Strange Games (top) and Aquarium.

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

Or how an American singer called Stingray brought underground Russian rock music to the West.

S muggled tapes, interrogation by the KGB, a Russian romance—and all because the lady loves the Soviet way. The person responsible is Joanna Stingray (née Fields), a 26-year-old American singer/songwriter who has just produced the first album of Russian underground music in the West.

Stingray became involved three years ago during a one-week holiday to the USSR. A Russian émigré friend had given her the Leningrad phone number of Boris Grebenshikov, the "father of Russian rock and roll." She heard the music, saw the bands and even fell in love with one of the musicians—namely, Yuri, guitarist with reggae-influence Kino.

So began a routine of skipping movies, burgers and bagels to save enough dollars

to subsidize trips to Russia. Eight trips, four smuggled tapes and several more encounters with the KGB and the FBI, the result is a double album, *Red Wave: 4 Underground Bands From The USSR* (Big Time Records/distributed by RCA—out this week).

Red Wave features Aquarium and an eclectic collection of underground bands including, of course, Kino. After the album's American release, Stingray was summoned to the Soviet state copyright agency by an angry official. "They wanted a piece of the royalties."

Stingray is now married to her Russian rocker and busy working on new projects. Visas permitting, she hopes—with moral support from David Bowie—to take Aquarium to America this summer.

It gives a new meaning to *Star Wars*. Judith Rawnsley



MAKING AN IMPRESSION: Group Kino with Yuri (Mr Stingray) second left.