

# GRAMMY<sup>®</sup> PLUS

Official Publication of the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences<sup>®</sup> September 1986

## LIVING IN THE USSR

Just in case you entertain ideas about living in the USSR as a rock musician, hear Joanna Stingray. Ms. Stingray, who smuggled tapes of Soviet rockers out of the country and turned them into a U.S. album, *Red Wave* (Big Time Records), says that rock musicians in Russia are divided into "Official" and "Unofficial" groups. Being in an "Official" band means it's a regular gig. They get paid by the government who also book tours for them, and their records are sold in stores legitimately. According to Ms. Stingray, the government also has control over "what you write and what you create." The musicians in the unofficial groups cannot record for the state-owned labels, their music cannot be sold in the stores and they cannot receive money for gigs.

"The one thing they do have is total creative freedom to create the music they want. Most of these artists would never give that up to become official," Ms. Stingray told *L.A. Reader*.

However the "Unofficial" groups do record (usually on 2-track machines in somebody's apartment set up as a studio) and make quarter-inch or cassette copies. Within a month, notes Ms. Stingray, there are tapes all over the Soviet Union. Needless to say, the musicians on Ms. Stingray's compilation are entirely "Unofficial."