

**РОССИЯНЕ И  
ОРДАНОВСКИЙ:**  
ДА ПОМОЖЕТ НАМ РОК!

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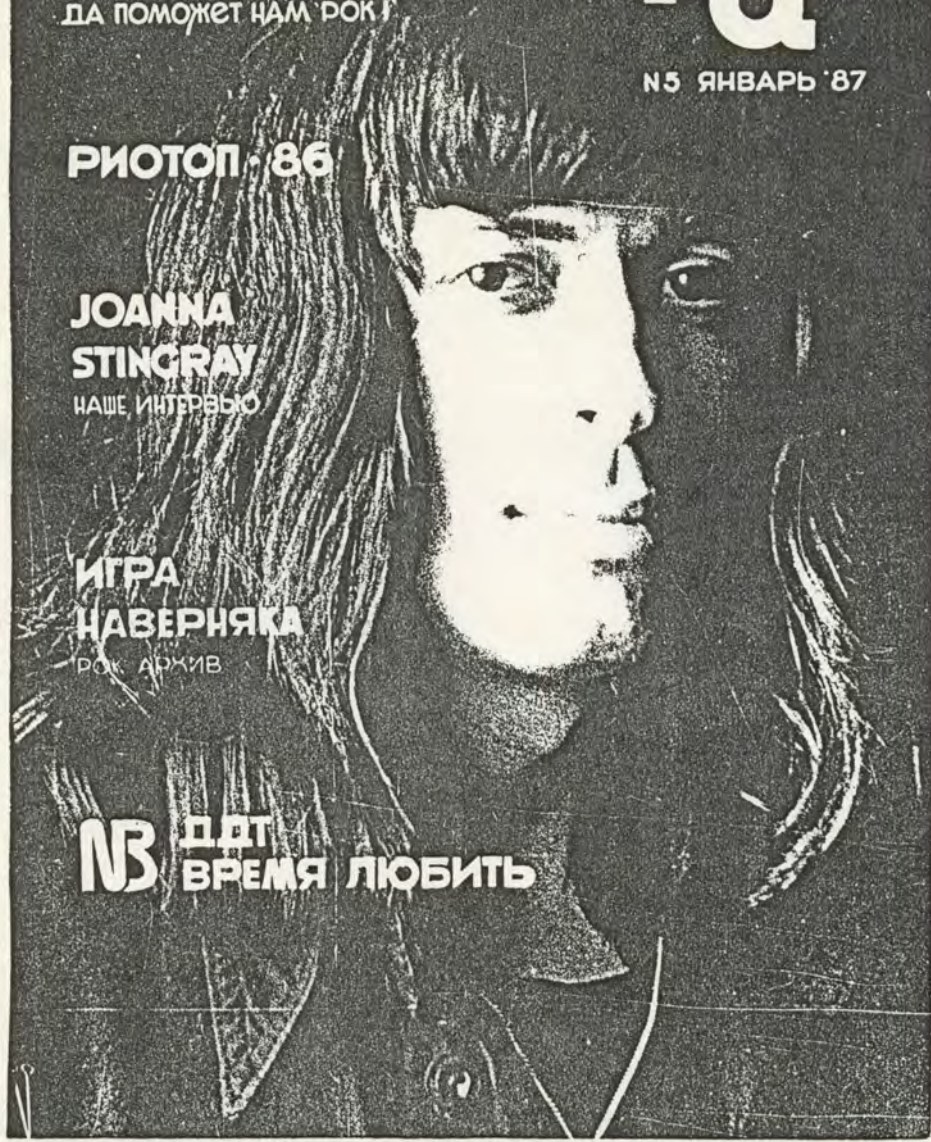
№5 ЯНВАРЬ '87

**РИОТОП '86**

**JOANNA  
STINGRAY**  
НАШЕ ИНТЕРВЬЮ

**ИГРА  
НАВЕРНЯКА**  
РОК АРХИВ

**ВЗ ДДТ  
ВРЕМЯ ЛЮБИТЬ**





Translated from Russian

1.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATION, OR  
SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH

The Girl from California

Joana Stingray (a 26-year-old singer and <sup>songwriter</sup> ~~author~~ of songs from Los Angeles) visited the Soviet Union for the first time in 1984 with a group of tourists of her sister, who was then studying in England. The tour schedule was tough, and when Joana arrived from Moscow, which had seemed "gray, cold and gloomy" to her, in Leningrad, she had just three days left. At the advice of an acquaintance of hers in Los Angeles who had emigrated to America several years back, she tried to make contact with Boris Grebenschikov, whom her friend had called "the main Leningrad rocker". Joana's first reaction to these words had been, "Surely you're joking. In Russia there isn't any kind of rock 'n roll." But seeing BG at a crowded metro station, she immediately understood that this was "an unusual person". They spent three days talking about life in America and in Russia, about music, they sang each other their songs. This meeting began Joana's many visits to Leningrad and Moscow, where with Grebenschikov's help she became acquainted with the varied and active musical life that followed its course far from large concert halls and was in no way reflected by the Soviet means of information. Joana met musicians, went to concerts (in particular, she was at the \_\_\_\_\_ festivals of the Leningrad Rock Club), and listened to recordings. Returning to the US, she described with delight to her acquaintances what she'd seen in Russia, but her words, as one would expect, were met with surprise and even bewilderment. Her friends, like the overwhelming majority of Americans as well, didn't and couldn't imagine what Joana had seen with her own eyes. Incomprehension reached a peak when the American public saw the performance of the group "Autograph", representing the Soviet Union, which was broadcast via Sputnik as part of the charitable show "Live Aid" (July 13, 1985). Most Americans just laughed at Autograph, and my friends asked me, "Joana, that can't be what you've flipped over, you don't really think that's interesting?!" The music of Autograph was so obsolete, you could have thought this group is from some cocktail bar. The performance of Autograph only strengthened the conviction of many Americans that the Russians are behind us in absolutely everything." This incident, as well as ~~well as~~ a meeting with several teenagers in Disneyland when she asked what they think of Russia and they answered that "Russia should be destroyed by bombing" forced Joana from raptures into action. Around this time she had already begun a collaboration with B. Grebenschikov -- they'd written drafts of possible joint songs, they had ideas about working together. Joana brought out of the USSR about 40 songs of Aquarium, Alisa, Strange Games and Kino -- groups which she considered the brightest representatives of the Leningrad rock scene and which she herself liked best. She applied (appealed/turned) with the suggestion of putting out something from this material on a record to the firm "Warner Bros.", whose representatives basically liked both this idea and the music which Joana presented, but lawyers of the company feared possible complications connected first of all with the non-legal export of the tapes, and secondly with possible claims as to authorial rights of these songs by the appropriate Soviet organizations.

Etude on Authorial Rights

A person committed to releasing in the West the music of Soviet performers comes up against a whole series of legal, ethical and esthetic problems. Concerning the problems of esthetics, he is faced with choosing material from the catalog of the company "Melodia" the only company of sound-recordings in the USSR -- or with choosing according to his own tastes and to possible interest in the material he chooses on the part of a potential auditorium in the West. Not one of the groups chosen by Joana Stingray had a record on the "Melodia" label.



Things are more complicated as far as ethical problems. What will be the consequences of the release of the record for the musicians themselves, will they be allowed to play after this, in general? On the other hand, how inspiring will the fact of the record's release be for them, who long ago despaired of releasing their music on "Melodia" or in general of having the possibility to legally appear to a wide public in the USSR, let alone the West? What may be the meaning of the appearance of the record for the cultural exchange between the USSR and the USA? There existed no simple answer to these questions.

But the most serious obstacles, of course, were the legal problems. In principle, two organizations are in charge of the export of Soviet culture -- "International Book" and the All-Soviet Agency for Authorial Rights (VAAP), which, by the way, was organized not so long ago (in May 1973), when the Soviet Union decided to join the International Conference on Authors' Rights. It was announced that VAAP is a public organization, but on the other hand, in the USSR there exists a governmental monopoly on foreign trade. A private individual may publish his creative work in the West only through VAAP. From the point of view of international law the situation turns out somewhat paradoxically. In addition, the authors of the songs which Joana wanted to issue (with the exception of BG) are not members of VAAP. Thus, it was pointless to apply to VAAP for permission to issue the record. (As precedents show, this is indeed so. In 1984 the organizers of an international jazz festival applied to the appropriate Soviet authorities with a request to send Sergei Kuryokhina to the festival; they received the reply that there is no such musician in the USSR). But even putting aside the membership of BG in VAAP, the release of records not registered with this organization of musicians is problematical. Witness the strange position of the company "Leo Records", which has put out more than 15 records of Soviet jazz musicians (G.T.Ch., Kuryokhin, Vapirova and others), and which had to pay authorial deductions to agencies of authorial rights that were linked by agreements with VAAP, even for that music that was never released and in reality has no chance of being released on records in the USSR. On the other hand, "Leo Records" does not receive money for use of its record-producing by Western means of mass communication, since Soviet musicians, according to Soviet legislation, do not have the right to join the International Organization in Defense of Authorial Rights of Musicians. An even more paradoxical situation.

And major American record companies, such as "Warners", linked by direct contacts with the company "Melodia", have even greater bases to fear legal complications

*Amended* Taking all of this into account, Joana abandoned the idea of issuing a record on a major label and appealed to an independent Los Angeles company, "Big Time Records", whose director immediately accepted her suggestion. The end process still more efforts on Joana's part, solving of technical problems and money (according to her, around \$15,000)

#### Red Wave

And now on June 27, 1986 appears the double album "Red Wave", with the subtitle "Four Underground Bands from the USSR" (Big Time - 1-10020). The first issue consisted of 10,000 copies, of these 5,000 were on colored (yellow and red) vinyl for collectors. Each of the four sides contained six songs of Aquarium (\*..), Kino (...), Strange Games (. .), Alisa (...). On the first side of the album cover is a photomontage: the leaders of the four group-participants\* (V. Sologub, BG, V. Tsoy, K. Kinchev), in the background is Red Square and the Cathedral of St. Basil; on the inside many black and white photos of the

*lists each song title*



named groups in various combinations and at various times; on the back cover, practically all the musicians who participated in the recording, standing in Mikhailovsky Garden in front of the Cathedral Savior-on-the-Blood. Also printed there are notes from the producer of the album, Joana Stingray: ... (Words of Chris Cross also cited) In addition, Joana expresses her gratitude to all who aided in the release of the record, both in the USSR and the USA. Also printed on the album cover is release info. and the inscription: "THE MUSICIANS DO NOT BEAR ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE RELEASE OF THESE RECORDINGS. STINGRAY PRODUCTIONS IS GRATEFUL TO ALL WHO HAD THE COURAGE TO PRESERVE AND TRANSMIT THESE TAPES." To the album is added texts of the songs and their English translations, plus information as to the makeup of the groups.

#### Mass Media

Joana did not have enough means to conduct a wide advertising campaign in support of "Red Wave", but news of the impending release of the record, resting on several interviews given by Joana, began to appear in many periodical publications of the USA and several other countries from early April. The issue of the record itself was met by a significant number of items and articles in various American publications: (nation-wide) "Newsweek", "Time", "U.S. Today"; (musical) "Billboard", "Cash Box"; (and regional) "Los Angeles Times", "Idaho Statesman", "Michigan Daily", "Tulsa World", etc. The number of publications in the course of summer 1986 amount to over 30, and by the end of the year they increased at least twofold. Despite petty inaccuracies, provoked on the one hand by the very nature of the American press and, on the other hand, by the absolute unexpectedness of the discovery of a new (for Americans) aspect of life in the USSR. Nonetheless, articles benevolently appreciated the fact that "real" rock music exists in the USSR, considering this another confirmation that the Russians and Americans have a lot more in common than was believed in the past; the articles also give American readers rather complete information on the modern state of rock music in the Soviet Union. Additionally, American television showed several videotapes shot by Joana in the USSR, along with the hour-long documentary on S. Kuryokhin and his group "Pop Mechanics" part of the documentary series on Soviet life done by the BBC. These broadcasts were reviewed in the American press.

#### The Untranslatable in Translation

The articles repeatedly used the term used by Joana to label ~~the~~ official and musical status, "underground", "unofficial" and "not recognized by the government", terms whose meaning Joana (having been to the USSR several times) fully understood as reflecting the true condition of musicians. Using the word "underground" (literally, underground), Joana had in mind the meaning of that word (grown more complex in the late '60s) as a term in art criticism, especially widespread as related to music, literature and film criticism: (1) directed against traditional values and views, against the morals of bourgeois society (about a movement, art, etc.); (2) earmarked for a narrow circle (about literature, etc.) published in small numbers, (3) experimental, avant-gardist, modernist, (4) characteristic of avant-gardist bohemians. ", Supplement to the Large Anglo-Russian Dictionary, edited by I. P. Galperin, Moscow, Russian Language Pub., 1980, p. 396. Obviously, in the given context the status of the Leningrad rock club groups practically corresponds to this definition. By characterizing the groups presented on "Red Wave" as "unofficial", Joana Stingray had in mind the contrast of them to so-called "official" groups, professional collectives of governmental organizations and those who till now have represented Soviet rock music abroad. In this same sense Joana uses the term "not recognized by the government" (literally ...), that is,



those who haven't received money from the government for their performances and recordings. These ideas also supplement other conditions. In 1984, according to customs officials, discoteques and so-called "recording studios serving the population", lists were distributed that prohibited the playing in discos, the recording and export abroad of records by over 100 Soviet groups, including all the group-participants of "Red Wave", "with the aim of raising the conceptual-artistic level of the repertoire of amateur (i.e., self-made) \_\_\_\_\_, rock groups and discoteques, organizations of real control over the content and quality of work of these collectives". In the Ts.T. (Central Television?) broadcast "Happy Kids", December 13, 1986, the fact that these lists exist was criticized, but an official answer as to their repeal has not yet taken place. Not one of these groups has had a record come out in the USSR. The Leningrad studio of the "Melodia" label had included in its plan a release of four songs by the group Aquarium (in the twelfth year of the group's existence), but according to the words of the studio's director, B. E. Glybovsky, "when we analyzed the texts, their poetic merits, we understood that it's still early to issue all that on a record. For our record has a huge listening audience, and we must approach the selection of works with total responsibility" (Smena, May 26, 1984). When, several years ago, the group "Manufactura" sent to VAAP a request, sanctioned by the administration of the Rock Club, to register its texts, VAAP returned the texts with comments on their low conceptual-artistic level. We could continue recounting similar facts

#### A Reverse Link

So, just what was the reaction to the appearance of "Red Wave" in the USSR? Quite naturally, VAAP was the first to react, demanding from B. Grebenshikov in early September a written declaration as to this fact (that the record appeared). The statement was written, BG admitted that the appearance of the record with his music breaks the legislation on authors' rights; also, craftily, he wrote that "the title of the record does not correspond to the real status of the ensemble". Among possible explanations for this strange formulation one could name the too-literal understanding by the directorship of VAAP of the word "underground" in the name of the record, along with the fact that Aquarium is beginning to be "officialized" -- in particular, on September 6 "Melodia" accepted a long-playing record by the group, though it came out only in January 1987. The first public mention of "Red Wave" was made in passing in commentaries of the publication "Arguments and Facts" re the interview of N. Soldatekov with BG ("A. and F.", No. 43, October 21-27, 1986).

In autumn of 1986, serious changes both in the status of the group Aquarium and in all of Soviet rock music truly began to occur. This is explained by reasons of a varied nature and of varying significance: a rebuilding of the cultural life of the USSR supported by numerous publications, tv broadcasts, interest of acknowledged figures in Soviet culture (A. Voznesensky, A. Zhitinsky, A. Pugachova and others) in rock music (as well as the activities of the musicians themselves? unclear). At the same time it is obvious that the appearance of "Red Wave" is not the last of reasons and, in any case, is the main cause for the positive decision re the appearance of a record by Aquarium.

Nevertheless, Joana Stingray's legal relations with VAAP had to be clarified. In October Joana Stingray and the directors of VAAP signed an agreement by which Joana Stingray payed compensation for the (causative) moral and material damage, while VAAP gave up future pretensions toward her, with the result that the record "Red Wave" was officially recognized by the appropriate foreign trade organizations



A preliminary agreement was also reached as to other possible joint projects. With this the incident should have been considered settled and the results of successful new contacts between the USSR and the USA in the realm of rock music should have been anticipated. But in No. 49 (December 6-13, 1986) of the magazine "Ogonyok" on page 18 there appeared an unexpected and strange item, entitled \_\_\_\_\_, well-wishing "rock-patrons", signed by A. Komarov and M. Sigalov; in it they used the ill-fated word "underground" and facts of the supposedly ill-intentioned distortion of Joana Stingray re the status of Aquarium and other groups and her breaking of Soviet laws, as well as a quote from the letter of BG to VAAP (which, according to a representative of VAAP, fell into the hands of journalists by unknown means); (in the article they are) trying to show that all the activities of Joana and the newspaper "U.S. Today" (quotes from which they incorporate in the article) are no more than an ordinary ideological diversion against the USSR, completely depriving the activities of Joana Stingray of any positive significance. The authors underscore the fact that this occurs at a time of a basic rebuilding of life in Soviet culture, forgetting that the record was prepared for release long before the start of changes in the attitude toward amateur music in the USSR and came out before the "legalization" of Aquarium and the penetration by groups from the Rock Club into Soviet means of mass communication. A worker at the publisher of "Ogonyok" later noted that this publication was an echo "of old trends" in Soviet journalism. Indeed, when Joana again came to the USSR at the end of December and appealed to the editors of "Ogonyok" for explanations, at the meeting set for January 13, 1987 the main editor V. Krotch gave her official apologies; employees interviewed her and BG, who'd attended the meeting, promising to print the interview as a refutation. Joana soon left the USSR, considering this problem also taken care of. But on January 28, 1987, 17 million readers of "Komsomolskaya Pravda" (compared to the 1.5 million issues of "Ogonyok") saw the garish heading, "Red Wave on a Turbid Sea/on Turbid Waters/on Troubled Waters". The author, V. Mikhailov (a pseudonym?) repeats the same inferences of Komarov and Sigalov and adds to them a great amount of information on the varied nature of contacts between Soviet rock musicians and representatives of the international musical community, lots of which is distorted. The first one-third of the article repeats practically verbatim the "Ogonyok" publication (does the right hand not know what the left hand is doing?), but further on they assert that Joana did not care about the moral and material damage to the Soviets in issuing "Red Wave" (remember that this was written three months after Joana had concluded an official agreement with VAAP!). Further, the author tries to show that even without Joana the Western public is very well acquainted with Soviet rock, citing examples of Western music figures who've become acquainted with Soviet rock musicians and left the country with tapes but, in contrast to Joana, "not one of these people used these materials for harm". For harm to whom? Here one may recall the friend of several music journalists, in particular Komarov and Sigalov, whose article is recalled in the publication of the strange "V. Mikhailov", Stas Namin, who several times publicly denied amateur rock music any kind of artistic significance, during his trip to the USA at the invitation of the organization "Children for Peace", during one meeting he spoke of the wonderful material position of Soviet rock musicians, but to a question re amateur musicians he answered that these are people who simply don't know how to play, he earned several uncomplimentary words for this from Joana Stingray, who was there. On his return Namin declared, in front of witnesses, that Joana would return to the USSR "only over his dead body". And the problem isn't limited to personal insult. At its current level of development, Soviet amateur rock music presents serious competition to professional rock music, including that performed by Stas Namin's group, Autograph and others, who have taken on themselves the role



the  
of the only representatives of/Soviet rock scene abroad. Apparently, as a result of this, two campaigns were begun in print -- one of which praised in every way possible the successes of Autograph and Namin abroad, often distorting facts and exaggerating their importance (see, in particular, the review/survey of the press in R.I.O. no. 5), while the other (campaign) through all possible means negated the significance of the activities of Joana Stingray, attempting to create a cheerful picture of the position of the amateur musicians, as does the author of the article in "KP" already mentioned, Sigalov (his interview with the president of the musical organization "Holland's Movement of Pop Music" ,,,). Both of them (and this man is not alone) put into the mouth of the Dutch words about the down-right ideal position of the musicians of the Leningrad Rock Club, described by participants in the groups      and Tambourine, with whom they supposedly met. However, members of the group Bystravka (? unclear) categorically deny the meeting with the Dutch. And the leader of Tambourine, V. Levi, also does not recall this. And as to the "wonderful conditions", the leader of Vystavka (Joana -- this is the name that was unclear twice above; it means "Exhibit") expressed it unequivocally: "In the course of the past five years, the group has received no help whatsoever. Everything Vystavka has achieved, it's done itself." But the authors of the articles stubbornly advertise the success of Autograph on "Live Aid". The American opinion on this event you already know. The article in "KP" ignores the time sequence of events, showing that Aquarium, Kino and others of that ilk are long recognized groups and welcome guests of mass communication -- at the same time the tv debut of Kino (Leningrad TV) took place only in December 1986, while the radio debut of Strange Games and Alisa occurred in January-February 1987. Journalists do similar things, speaking of authorial rights, of the program "Top of the Polls" having achieved registration at all appropriate organizations with the group Popular Mechanics non-registered at VAAP. A recounting of facts of journalistic lack of conscientiousness becomes tiresome.

We want to end on a bright note. Stingray Productions continues to receive letters from children and adults from all corners of America, talking about how they were surprised and glad to hear the music from "Red Wave", that they want to know more about Soviet rock musicians and about life in the USSR in general. It's doubtful that Sigalov gets such letters. But we hope that, despite all the "troubled waters", the activity of Joana Stingray will serve to strengthen the cultural ties and friendship between the peoples of the USSR and USA. Similarly, many people in the United States hope for the same. Not without reason is one of the reviews on the album: "Popularization of Soviet rock can help detent."

R. ... What else can be added? In the USA 15,000 copies of "Red Wave" have been sold. On April 15 the company RCA releases the record in the form of a single album in Great Britain. Joana hopes to continue completely official contacts with Soviet amateur rock musicians. In the magazine "Ogonyok" No. 7 (February 14-21, 1987) in the article "Rock musicians for Trust", there finally appeared the first positive appraisal of "Red Wave", though the author, B. Kovalev, ashamedly (or shamefully?) does not mention the fact of the official apology to Joana, and from the text one can conclude that it's Joana who apologizes to "Ogonyok", but well, okay, because there are photographs in the magazine of a smiling Joana together with BG and cover of the album itself. You can hope for better.

R.I.O. (annual 1986), magazine variant 1987.