

Punk Princess finds God



As she was... Poly at peak punk power.

ONE of the punk rock world's most outrageous stars has swapped rebellion for religion.

Way-out singer Poly Styrene, who made the big-time with her band X-Ray Spex, is living in a Hare Krishna temple.

The Punk Princess has ditched her famous teeth-braces, wild hair-dos and eye-boggling Day-Glo clothes to learn about the four basic principles of the Krishna movement.

They are—no sex, no meat, no alcohol and no gambling.

And the voice that grated out aggressively such hits as "On Bondage, Up Yours," "The Day The World Turned Day-Glo," and "I Am A Cliche" now sings demure religious numbers in the temple, and on street walk-arounds of Krishna followers.

MEANWHILE Poly's musician husband Adrian Bell is out on the road touring.

"Nothing I have given up really mattered to me—I've gained everything," said sari-clad Poly, cuddling Celeste, her little daughter by Adrian, at the opulent temple in Soho, London.

"I became a punk to show my rejection of what was happening in the world.

"I knew there was something I had to do, something I had to find, and now I've discovered it in Krishna."

As a student, or Bhaktin, Poly, 24, has reverted to her real name, Marian Elliott.

Poly Styrene and baby move into Krishna temple

By FELICITY HAWKINS

And at the moment she is not finding it too difficult to accept the Krishna movement's principles.

"Giving up sex is no problem. I was never as bad as I was described.

"Punks are supposed to drink themselves sick, take drugs and sleep around, but I didn't really do any of those things.

"Well, now I've found freedom through celibacy. Sex is very ageing, and so is meat-eating.

"I've been a vegetarian for years and I've never really gambled or drunk a lot, so this way of life suits me."

Poly's residence in the temple means normal married life is out of the question.

"I hope Adrian will visit us. Krishna does not bar marriage but it allows sex only for procreation. All other sex is lust and must be ruled out in the search for purity.

"It would be nice if he did join us here. But that's for him to decide."

Poly first became interested in the Krishna movement nine years ago but it was pushed to one side as X-Ray Spex hit the road to fame.

On marrying she started to look into the subject seriously.

"Although I was having a good time and earning a lot of money for a kid, I wasn't happy.

"My large expensive studio that I rented, my nice car and the clothes I bought every week brought no real joy.

"I gave up punk once but came back to record my last album, Translucence.

"But when Celeste was born I decided I really wanted to become a responsible parent.

"So I started reading about the Krishna philosophy and could find no flaws in it.

"About three months ago I decided I wanted to become a full-time member.

"I've given up my studio to live in the temple."

"I'm still in the process of giving up my material possessions. It takes time to adjust."

"But I hope to become a full, initiated member of the movement, with the title of Sanskrit, later this year."

Reaction to Poly's switch to Krishna, "a science of self-realisation," as she puts it, has been mixed.

Her mum is pleased but her manager is most unhappy.

"Mum thinks I've become a better, more considerate daughter and Adrian is generally happy for me.

"X-Ray Spex have broken up but Laura Logie, who used to sing with us, is also a Krishna follower.

"My manager has been the only one against the idea and we've now parted company.

"Krishna is my manager now."



AS SHE IS... Poly and Celeste in the temple. "Giving up sex is no problem—I've found freedom in celibacy."

Pictures TERRY RAND.