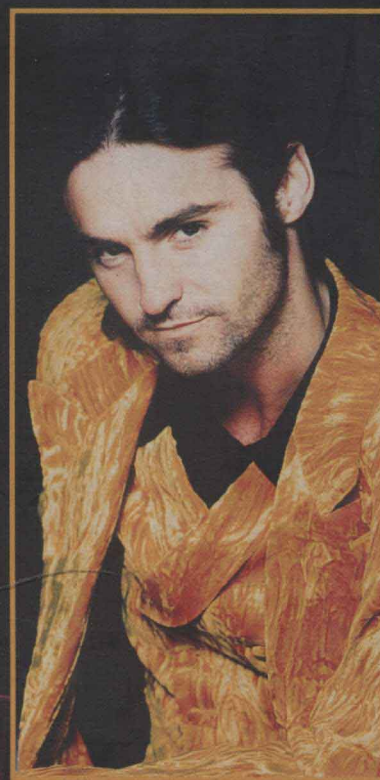
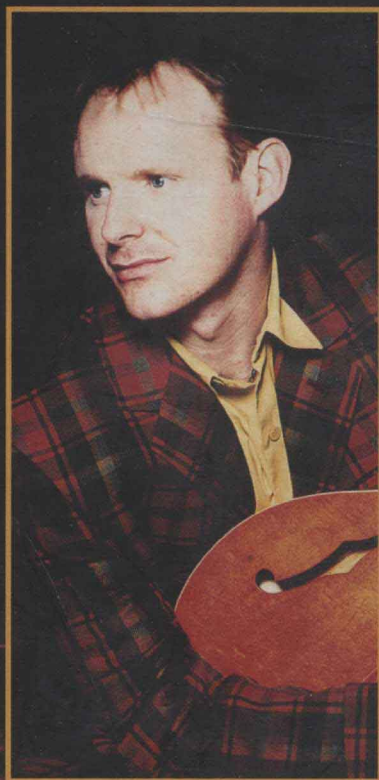


# *Wet Wet Wet*

P I C T U R E D

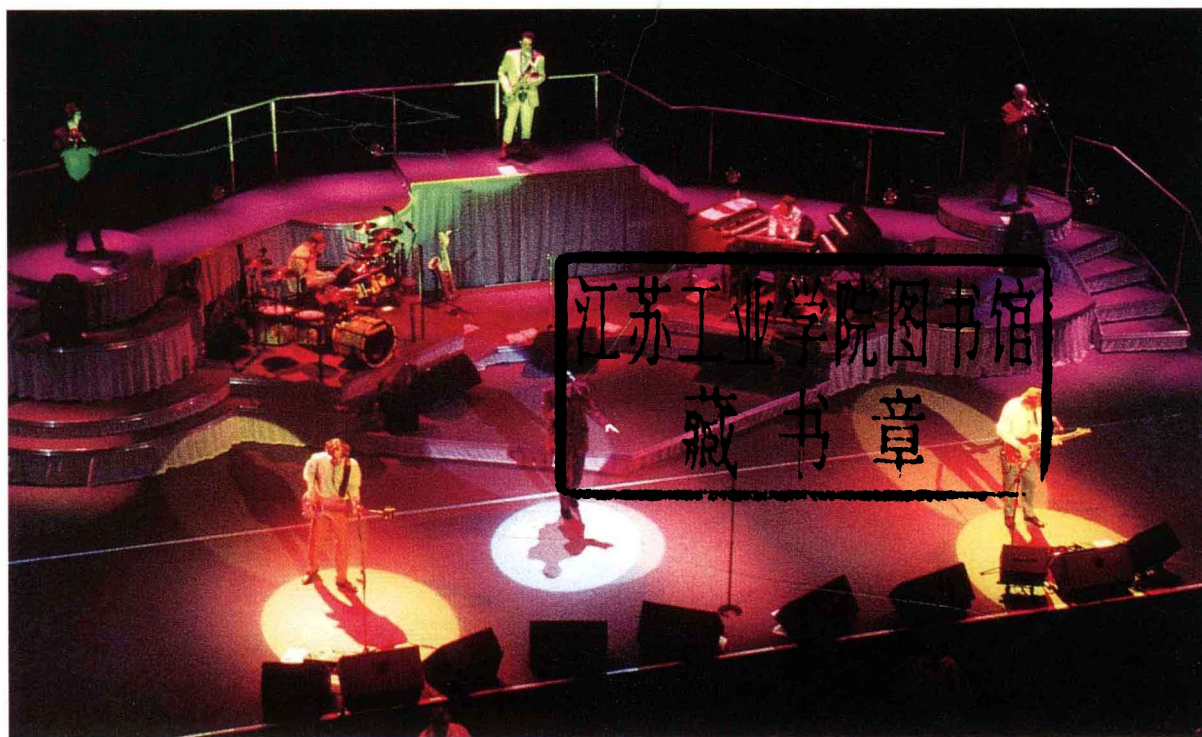
THE ONLY OFFICIAL BOOK CREATED WITH THE EXCLUSIVE CO-OPERATION OF THE WETS





# Wet Wet Wet

## P I C T U R E D











# *Wet Wet Wet*

P I C T U R E D

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SIMON FOWLER

TEXT BY MAL PEACHEY

DESIGN BY IDEAS

**W1**

*Virgin*

## THE BAND

Graeme Clark	Bass
Tommy Cunningham	Drums
Neil Mitchell	Keyboards
Marti Pellow	Vocals
Graeme Duffin	Guitars

Paul Spong	Trumpet
Neil Sidwell	Trombone
Jamie Talbot	Saxophone

### Management:

Elliot Davis for  The Precious Organisation

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For Virgin Publishing:

Philip Dodd	Publisher
Carolyn Price	Editor



GRAEME CLARK  
PUNKED IN, SOULED OUT

TOMMY CUNNINGHAM  
WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

NEIL MITCHELL  
SWEET LITTLE MYSTERY

MARTI PELLOW  
I CAN GIVE YOU EVERYTHING

ON THE ROAD  
SOMEWHERE SOMEHOW

BACKSTAGE  
IT'S NOW OR NEVER

LOVE IS  
ALL AROUND AND IN THE CROWD

THE WRITING GAME  
LIP SERVICE



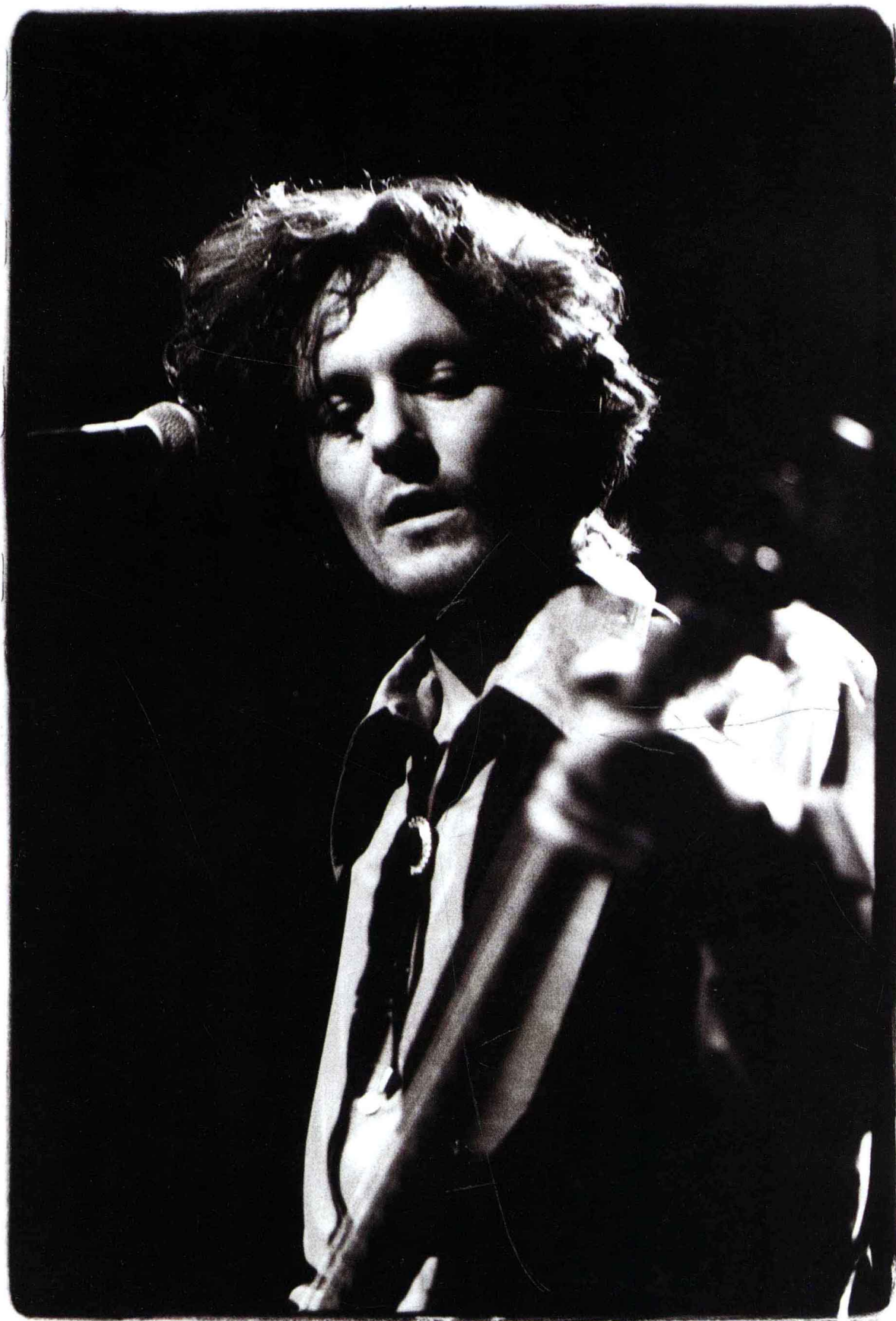




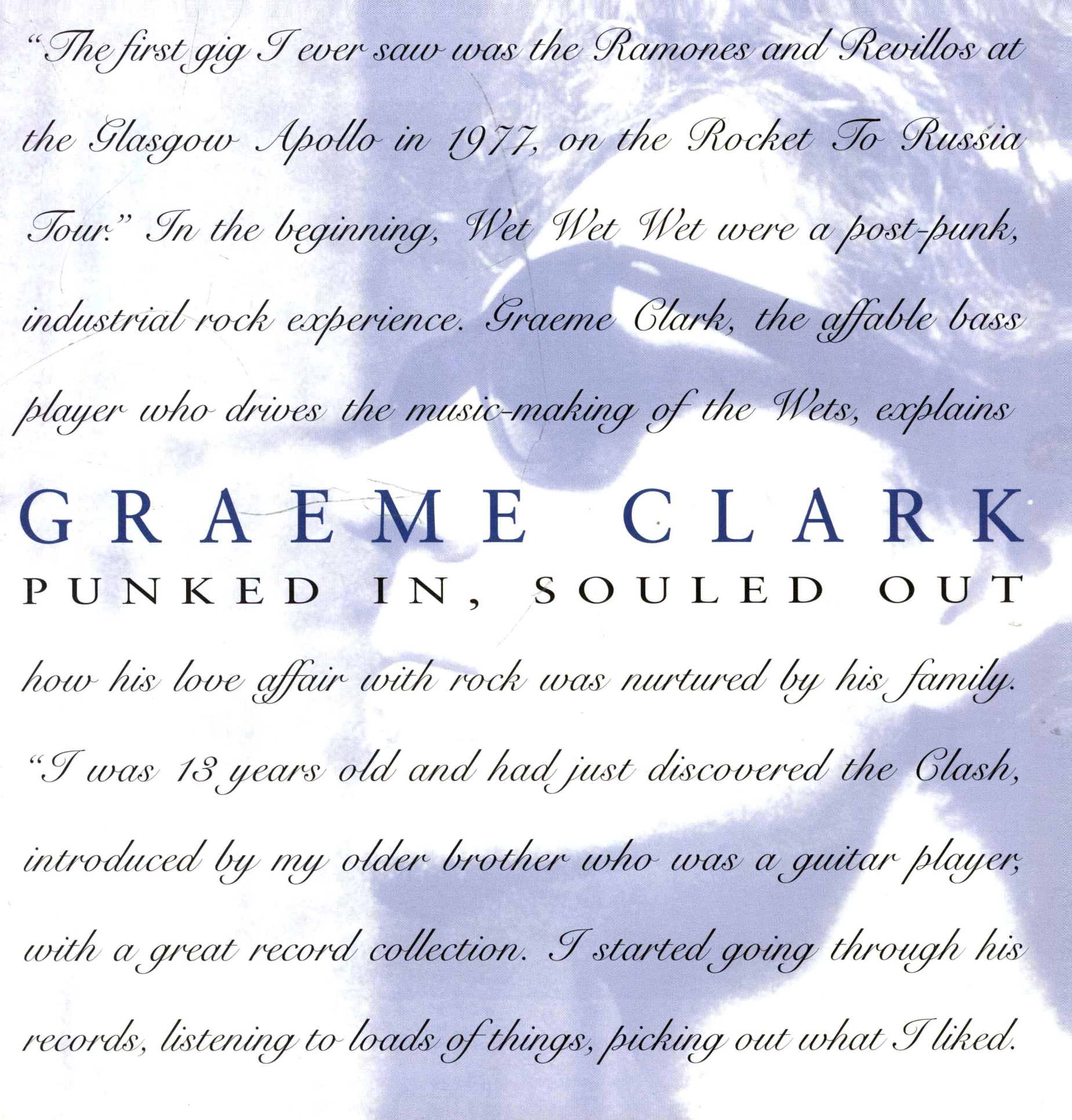












*“The first gig I ever saw was the Ramones and Revillos at the Glasgow Apollo in 1977, on the Rocket To Russia Tour.” In the beginning, Wet Wet Wet were a post-punk, industrial rock experience. Graeme Clark, the affable bass player who drives the music-making of the Wets, explains*

## **G R A E M E   C L A R K** **P U N K E D   I N ,   S O U L E D   O U T**

*how his love affair with rock was nurtured by his family.*

*“I was 13 years old and had just discovered the Clash, introduced by my older brother who was a guitar player, with a great record collection. I started going through his records, listening to loads of things, picking out what I liked.*







*"I was a massive Clash fan, and wanted to be Paul Simonon. So I picked up a bass from a second-hand shop for £10. It had three strings on it, was terrible, but almost looked the part because it was a Fender Jazz copy. I learned to play and then, although I felt punk had changed my life, and was the greatest thing to happen to me, in the 80s it just fizzled out."*

Unlike Graeme's enthusiasm for music, however. As he recalls, "It was always my intention to play music, so I joined loads of bands. The last one was with Neil's cousin Craig Ferguson, who was the drummer. It was a totally pretentious affair, all the lyrics were about Nietzsche and Kierkegaard and that bollocks. The only reason I joined them (their name was Anna Hausen), was because they had a record contract with Human Records, a small independent. They had two singles to record, but this guy who brought me in had actually sacked the original members after the first single. Needless to say, that didn't go anywhere."

Although Graeme had taken a huge step in joining Anna Hausen when, he says, "I left school at 15½ to join the band, convinced that exams weren't going to do me any good at

all", he had nothing else to go to. As he saw it, "There was huge unemployment on Clydebanks at the time and I just wanted to be a musician. This was my first big chance."

Little did he know then how right that would be. By the time the singer had left, he explains, "Tommy and Neil joined the band." Which signalled a change in musical direction that was as dramatic as the results it brought. "Around the time we were big on ABC because they'd just released *Lexicon Of Love* and we all loved it. So we thought, forget doing these Magazine covers and pretentious crap, let's write songs with smooth chord changes instead of contrived ones."

So they did, and liked the sound of what they were doing. All they needed was a singer. Which is where a young, apparently shy Mark MacLachlan came in. "One night Neil and I decided that Mark, who we'd gone to school with, could sing, so I called him up and in the understatement of a lifetime he said, 'I don't think I'm up to it'. I said 'Just come up and give it a go'."

Which he did, surprising himself, if not his former school-pals who knew he could do it. Of course the name had to go, so he became Marti Pellow. Graeme felt settled with the lineup, and so they began rehearsing in earnest. "After that we practised a lot, and did a few covers including Frank and Nancy Sinatra's *Something Stupid* - we were way ahead of the times, too hip for our own good, really. We decided to spend two years writing, rehearsing, getting ready while other bands we knew were playing the circuit earning money doing Jam songs. Tam was doing some of that, earning a few quid, but the rest of us didn't want to. The aim was always to get a record deal."



Which the determined bass player set out to do in time-honoured fashion. Like so many keen young hopefuls before him, Graeme travelled to the nation's capital to see the record companies.

"I went down to London with a demo tape which we paid £60 to record," he recalls. "I took it to Phonogram and a guy from A&R department said, 'Nah, it's crap. Look lads, if you're going to record a demo, use a good studio.' We were on the dole, we couldn't afford it! I tell you though, it was brilliant going back to this guy after Phonogram had signed us and saying, 'Well, you could have had us for pennies.'" He laughs quietly, then muses, "I don't know where he is now."

"Anyway, on the last day of my trip to London, Geoff Travis at Rough Trade saw the potential. He was setting up a new label, Blanco Y Negro, which he wanted us to record for. But he suggested we use Ranking Roger and Dave Wakeling as producers. I wanted to use Elvis Costello, who'd produced the Bluebells early on, and thought at least he must have some affinity with Glaswegians. But Geoff said he'd book us two days in a studio in Birmingham with Ranking Roger and Dave." At this point, any normal, struggling young band with stardust in their eyes would have jumped on the first available rusting Transit to Brum. But not the Wets. Demonstrating a single-mindedness which would eventually steer them to fame and fortune, Graeme remembers, "When I told the rest of the guys they said, 'It's not exactly awe-inspiring, is it?'"

So they didn't go. But they used the fact that an esteemed record biz mogul had shown interest in them to get gigs, and a manager.

"Geoff came to Glasgow six months later, after we'd met Elliot Davis," Graeme recalls. "At that time Elliot was managing Sunset Gun and running a club on Wednesday nights where bands could just turn up and play, using Sunset's equipment. We took our guitars and drumsticks along and played at the club. Elliot called me a couple of nights later and told me about the management company he wanted to start, asking if he could manage us." The way Graeme remembers it, Elliot was looking to handle bands with as different a sound as possible.

"At the time he was also talking to two other bands. One sounded like Blue Oyster Cult, one sounded like Elvis Costello or the Kinks, and there was us who had a soul kind of thing going. Although to be honest, I never really saw us like that. I never grew up with soul music, I loved the Motown stuff and all that, but I was more into the Clash, Costello and Ramones and rock'n'roll. But Marti's voice had people saying we were a soul band." Which is how a post-punk, industrial rock band named Anna Hausen came to be a multi-million selling soul band named Wet Wet Wet. Or not a soul band exactly!

*"Even now I don't think we're just a soul band. I think there's a whole range of stuff in there. There's a bit of country, a bit of bluegrass, a bit of rock'n'roll, a bit of soul, pop. It's all there really."*



