

Shaping the present

THIS year-long display attempts to show how design in Britain, from graphic and product design to urban planning, addressed the task of adapting society to the rigours of the modern world.

The curators are only able to present a fragmentary picture. But the selection of documents and objects — including vintage cars, austere furniture produced during the Second World War, an edition of groundbreaking Eighties style bible *The Face* and details of the current regeneration plans for the Lea Valley — is broad and thought-provoking.

The exhibition starts in the Thirties when a group of European émigrés found Britain, as Russian architect Berthold Lubetkin put it, “lost in a deep provincial sleep”, and tried to shake things up, starting a ceaseless tussle between the love of traditional ornamentation and

EXHIBITION

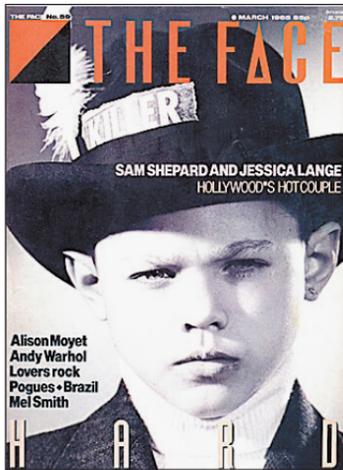
Designing Modern Britain

Design Museum
Nick Hackworth

the Modernist taste for straight lines and simplicity.

The pace of change was quicker in areas where the general population had less say. One of the most significant items is one of the earliest, Harry Beck's Thirties schematic of the London Underground. Beck modelled his design on a circuit board, effectively summing up the new world-view in which efficiency was all.

The principle is visible too in the change from the 1920s Austin Seven, Britain's first widely affordable car, to the sleek curves of the E-Type Jaguar of 1961.



Groundbreaking graphics: the Eighties' coolest magazine

As the last, foreboding display of the Lea Valley regeneration scheme highlights, the pressures of modernity are only increasing. Designers, as ever, face the unenviable task of shaping that change.

● Until December 2006 (0870 833 9955).

“India is 1,269,000 square miles. Don't tell me Greene King couldn't find it.”

Mr N Parmar, Landowner, Rajasthan



The India Pale Ale that never made it to India. In the late 1800s, we created an ale specifically for India. To help this crisp, refreshing beer survive the long sea journey, we brewed it with more hops. But when the pint took off in Britain, we didn't bother to ship it. Sorry Mr Parmar, you might have a big country but you're not getting the big taste of Britain's favourite IPA.



A Mahler to marvel at

CLASSICAL

BBCSO/Belohlavek

Barbican

Barry Millington

THE last time I reviewed the BBC Symphony Orchestra was exactly six weeks ago when it was celebrating its 75th birthday. On that occasion I felt a bit of a party pooper, because for all the residual affection I have for the orchestra, I couldn't help but comment on its aggressively edgy tone: worse still, textural layering and balance went out of the window.

On Saturday night the orchestra was playing Mahler's Ninth in the same hall and under the same conductor, Jiri Belohlavek, and I am delighted to be able to report a transformation. Not only was the tone in all departments vibrant and cultured, but balances were well judged, the playing energised but sophisticated.

The orchestra has undergone some personnel changes in recent times — there appear to be more women than ever before, a number of them in key positions — and one intuited a real sense of collective pride. Rightly so, for this was an exceptional account of Mahler's death-confronting, penultimate symphony.

The way Belohlavek highlighted the first movement's solo sonorities — fruity bass clarinet, menacing muted horn, declamatory trumpet — yet integrated them into a richly complex fabric was little short of masterly.

The rhythmic bounce of the second movement, with strings digging in lustily on accented beats, aptly evoked a peasants' dance, but there was energy aplenty for the fierce Rondo Burleske that followed, gradually screwing up the tension to the movement's manic conclusion. The robust counterpoint was clearly projected and the latter stages of the movement were superbly handled: the stark contrast of black comedy alternating with a vision of the hereafter has never seemed more convincing.

The final Adagio was impressive not only for the sublime hymn-like statements but also for the sense of desolation conveyed in the intervening episodes. An outstanding performance.

Primal scream of gypsy punk

POP

Gogol Bordello

ICA

Richard Godwin

EUGENE Hutz can't be contained for much longer. The luxuriously moustachioed Ukrainian is a well-known New York eccentric, revered for his performances with his local band of immigrant punks, Gogol Bordello — a kind of Russian take on the Pogues. Now, with a scene-stealing appearance in Liev Schreiber's *Everything is Illuminated* and a new album that captures the Bordello's untrammelled live energy (*Gypsy Punks*, out last week), Hutz's charisma is set to work its weird magic on the rest of the world.

It took him all of three songs to turn the ICA from a respectable venue to a maelstrom of depravity on Saturday. Rhythms don't get much more primal than the punk-polka of songs like *Think Locally F**k Globally* and *Not a Crime* which, if a little messy on record, are irresistible in performance, brought to colourful life by an engagingly motley band who include a grey-haired refugee on violin, a virtuoso accordionist and a raggedy go-go-girl, whose job it was to tear around the stage and scream.

As Hutz bellowed his broken English lyrics like a man possessed, the collective sense of abandon became palpable. The admirably diverse crowd, glamorously dressed up in the band's signature peasant bondage gear, gleefully created the wildest mosh-pit this side of Kiev. Hutz repeatedly flung himself into the throng — at one point singing from atop a huge bass drum above the audience. The final stage invasion was joyfully inevitable, and, in its ramshackle, volatile way, strangely poetic.

Punk is alive and well — it's just got a funny accent.



Mesmerising: Simon Keenlyside in the title

Budd

IT WAS déjà vu all over again, to quote immortal Yogi Berra, at the opening night of ENO's new *Billy Budd*. For the time in as many years we enjoyed a shining musical feast in the auditorium without knowing there was a body still warm in library.

Sean Doran's abrupt departure from top job last week, so soon after his predecessor Nicholas Payne and music director Paul Daniel, has driven even the most phlegmatic of us to anger about the shibolethic methods of the ENO board and unloved chairman. Doran, a wrong choice maybe but nonetheless making tragedy begins to look a sacrificial victim. The chief appointment of two insiders to replace him, without due process despite ENO's £19 million public subsidy, is indefensible.

Love and



Stimulating: Elliot Levey, Robin Soans and