# Industria

There's a singular pleasure in following a hot magazine. Each issue is a fresh evolution of graphic conceit, and you never know what crazy shit the art director is gonna throw down next. It was like that in '83 with London scenezine *The Face,* designed by Neville Brody.

He played the most obscure types; Chinon was a favorite, deftly mixed with other Euro exotica (Mecanorma transfer lettering, I believe) such as Tzigane, Antique Olive and Handel. Mixed, that is, letter by letter, in a manner descended from the punk collages of Jamie Reid. Quite appropriate for an article on the polymorphous Annie Lennox—but something was missing, although no one knew it at the time. Eurythmics.

Punk, for all its liberating virtue, was a boring, sloppy genre that outstayed its welcome as the British economy boomed back from the recession that spawned Rotten and Vicious. "Goodbye Seventies" sang an exasperated Alison Moyet of Yaz in 1982, her awesome pipes soaring over Vince Clarke's precisely programmed dance beat.

It's all about the beat. What early 'eighties typography lacked was the plastic quality of the New Wave disco beat; its metaphor was off. Brody's layouts were marvellous, but they were not radically different from Roy Gyongy's work for *Wet* in 1980. His typographic treatments— such as "Blur" (a darkroom technique) and compressing text into wordmarks/logos—were on the money, capturing the punk generation's emerging affluence and ambivalence towards commercial culture, but the types Brody was obliged to use prevented the full realization of his mature style. The latest fare from a closed-shop font industry, pervaded by the ITC look, was too damn humanist.

Brody's breakthrough came in May, 1984, with
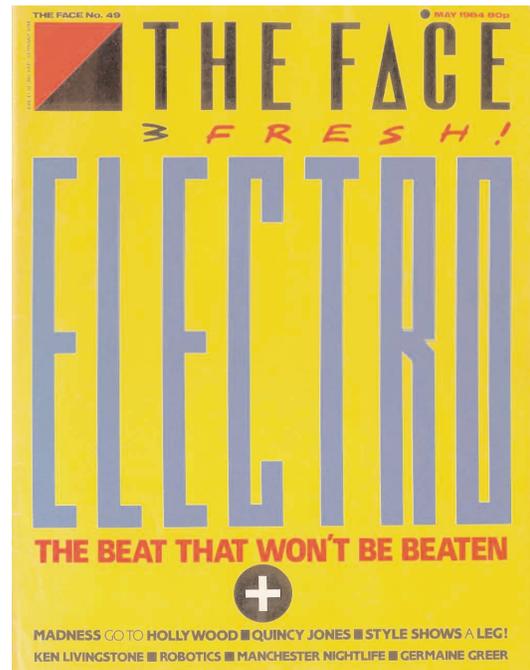
a *Face* cover that was a type-only affair, dominated by the massively elongated, reductively formalized word "ELECTRO" ("the beat that won't be beaten"), custom drawn with all straight lines, and the typographic subtleties of stress, proportion and letterspacing ruthlessly excluded. Talk about expressive typography! This was what the beat looked like—letters with a simplicity that matched the low-bit sounds of the Linn drum machine and Roland bass, positioned on the page, as the notes are in time, with absolute regularity.

Following the scent, Brody rapidly constructed the typeface later named Industria, and debuted it throughout *The Face* in July. What a leap, and so rare: an art director designing a typeface for his own magazine. And, as with Lubalin and *Avant Garde,* the synergy between type and layout created pages that astounded the design world with their force and originality.

It would be several years before Brody began to work digitally, and Industria would not be released as a font until 1990. It is generally considered ironic that, with its analog manufacture, it was to become (along with Licko's "true to materials" Matrix and Oblong), one of the defining faces of the digital aesthetic.

Irony?—it's for those who don't know better.   —NICK SHINN, *Toronto, 2002.*