symbolic material was needed could become a highly intellectual one. Even so it is by no means unknown to hear boos at the opera or ballet when a designer goes further with this game than some of the audience feel is acceptable.

The product designer Richard Seymour talks about the 'X-factor' in the work of Seymour/Powell:

> The X-factor in a product is its essential personality, its desirability quotient . . . We're constantly searching for that elusive product iconography, the psychological bridge between consumers as they are and consumers as they'd like to be.
>
> (Gardner 1989)

This idea of creating a product with a 'personality' to express some features of the lifestyle of its owner is demonstrated by a whole series of designs by Seymour/Powell including their remarkable Blackhawk Stutz electric guitar designed in 1986 which is intended for the rock performer, and departs radically from the traditional form inspired by the need for an acoustic enclosure (Fig. 10.4). In graphic design things need to be even more direct:

> It is in symbolic, visual terms that the designer ultimately realises his perceptions and experiences; and it is in a world of symbols that man lives. The symbol is thus the common language between artist and spectator.
>
> (Rand 1970)

In architectural design, the symbolic is less directly necessary than for theatre and graphic design, but none the less important

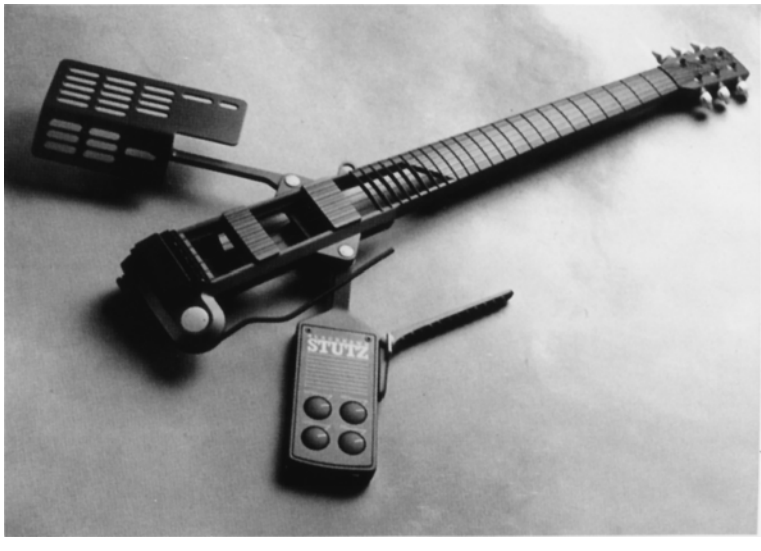

Figure 10.4
The Blackhawk Stutz Electric Guitar designed by Seymour/Powell expresses the rock performer for whom it was intended

according to some writers who have warned against the danger of architects only attending to formal constraints:

> Spatial structure is not a goal in itself, but is only relevant if it concretises the spatial implications of a character.
>
> (Norburg-Schultz 1975)

The great philosopher Wittgenstein, who became something of a student of architecture through his friendship with Adolf Loos went so far as to insist that this was an essential distinguishing feature of architecture as opposed to mere building. He wrote in a private notebook that:

> Architecture immortalises and glorifies something. Hence there can be no architecture where there is nothing to glorify . . . Architecture is a gesture. Not every purposive movement of the human body is a gesture. And no more is every building designed for a purpose architecture.
>
> (Wilson 1986)

Conclusions

Designers do not work or think in the sort of mental strait-jacket implied by the analysis used in this chapter to map out the range of influences on guiding principles. The Malaysian architect, Ken Yeang has attracted considerable attention for his approach to building in the tropical countries of south-east Asia. A review of his own books reveals the guiding principles behind this growing and consistent corpus of work. Ken investigated the ecological issues involved in architectural design for his doctorate at Cambridge somewhat before such ideas became fashionable. He started to lecture and write about these ideas, and began his architectural practice in Kuala Lumpur where he inevitably found himself contributing to the increasingly vertical skyline of that city. Concerned to develop a sense of regional identity in the face of unthinkingly imported western architectural ideas, he began to study the locally traditional forms and construction of buildings. Such a study led him to the conclusion that one of the strongest influences on traditional architecture was a response to the climate. The hot, wet tropical climate of south-east Asia suggested