**Take a Walk**


Foremost, The City Observed is a discussion of the history of Boston taken from the perspective of a former MIT Architecture Department chairman. Through a series of fascinating walks in 19 sections of lower Boston, Lyndon introduces the reader to architecture as an overall subject, as it pertains to the Hub, and to the architectural, civil, and political histories of Boston.

Lyndon begins with the Old State House. “Among the features of the building least admired by citizens of the newly formed republic were a lion and unicorn embossing the gable at the State Street end, emblems of the power of the British throne. Removed in a bit of patriotic iconoclasm, they have since been restored, to embellishing the gable at the State Street end of the building.”

Even if you are not an architectural buff, you can’t help but be taken in by Lyndon’s fascination with the work of art we call Boston. While discussing The Tudor: “The building itself wiggle[s] up Joy Street, starting with a round bay on the corner, then a metal-clad quarter-round, then a couple of jogs, one for the entrance, another with a little curved balustrade making the stair, then a round bay, which straightens out, another jog and another round bay. Then suddenly a great right-angled piece rises up to a large arch at the top, embedded in which there’s a copper-clad bay. Fantastical. This splendid eccentric fits into the hill perfectly.”

While the current MIT buildings are not discussed in great detail, one fraternity house, Chi Phi at 32 Hereford Street, is mentioned as being the 1884 precedent to the Boston Public Library, built by the same firm four years later. Lyndon points out that the original MIT Rogers Building (no longer standing) was a sibling to the remaining Bowditch Teller building which itself was formerly the Museum of Natural History (1863). The original MIT structure was “MIT’s first building in the area, later to be joined by several others in the vicinity of Copley Square. Moss were vacated in 1916, when MIT moved across the river to its more extensive temple in Cambridge.”

As for the Twin’s current location, it is explained to the reader as he stands on the south side of the Harvard Bridge. “A quick survey, left to right, of the Cambridge bridge will show you the Hyatt Hotel by Grand, MIT housing towers by Stubbings, low, new brick terraced housing by Sert. Jackson Associates, the building long, sinuously bending wall of Audubon Hall House dormitories, the pompous granite mass of MIT buildings designed by Bowdworth, two towers designed by Pei and Catalano, and the model apartment building at 100 Memorial Drive,—all notable works.”

The City Observed: Boston is the second in a planned series of books from Random House. The first was a guide to Manhattan in 1979. Twelve maps at the start of the Boston text are set aside for a discussion of architectural terminology. Maps and photographs are literally used throughout. If you have been trying to get through MIT without sitting foot in Boston, grab a copy of The City Observed: Boston if it still doesn’t get you to visit The Hub, at least you can answer people during the summer when asked, “Whaddat think?”

If you’ve lived here all your life and know everything there is to know about Boston, pick up a copy anyway. There’s enough fascinating trivia embedded in the discussion of each building that you may view the entire city anew your next trip across the bridge.

**Beam me up**

**ARTS**

The Hasty Pudding Theatre presents Hail the American's Tribal Love Rock Musical. Performances are at the Theatre in 32 Holyoke Street, Cambridge. Tickets are $8 and $6. Performances begin at 8pm Tuesday-Saturday, and at 3pm on Sunday.

For more information call 497-5477.

The MIT Musical Theatre Guild presents Stephen Sondheim's Company, in the Kneale Little Theatre. Performances are on September 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11; 8pm, with a matinee on September 4 at 3:30pm. Tickets are $5 and $6. Performances begin at 8pm Tuesday-Saturday, and at 3pm on Sunday. For more information call 475-5477.

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The highlight of 1993’s Star Trek: The Motion Picture was the score composed by Jerry Goldsmith. The music ranged from the cheerfulness of “Hi, There” to the hard-hitting cackling of “Klingon Battle” and the grandeur of “The Enterprise.” Quality control at Columbia Records was not up to par at the time and many pressings were of poor quality — not to mention V’ger being spelled “Vejur” on the label. The movie itself also left a great deal to be desired; fortunately, Paramount realized the demand for a good Star Trek motion picture remained, and so Star Trek IV: The Wrath of Khan was born.

While revamping the legend of Star Trek, Paramount Pictures made two decisions. One was the switch to Atlantic Records, whose new soundtrack album is beautifully clear and crisp, the digital recording has brought through the full texture of the music. The second decision concerned the switch to James Horner as composer. Although Horner incorporated the original A. Courage series music with new compositions, the soundtrack lacks variety. There is a theme for the Enterprise (KIK), a theme for the Reliant (Khan), and a short motif for Spock.

The two main themes revolve around one another, change a bit here and there, and waver throughout the album. Although the music itself is occasionally lacking in the high end, what there is of it is very well done. The Enterprise theme is notably romantic, the Khan theme is notably barbaric, and between this and the high quality reverberating theme of the ship, the price. Even Nimoy’s narration at the end of the movie (“Space, the final frontier…” ) is included on the album.

Tonight Coolidge Corner Cinema presents a Silent House concert at the Metro, 15 Lansdowne Street, Boston. The local rock band will include master rhythm section producers Rowland, Shorrock, and Gibb Dunbar. Doors open at 8pm, tickets cost $8.50. Hey, natty dread! You be a bumcall to miss this one.

The Hayden Planetarium at the Museum of Science presents the final performances of Best Hits, a collection of sights and sounds from previous productions of Heavy Water Lightshow. Special effects include laser, video, and computer animations set to the music of Pink Floyd, Van Halen, and Santana. Shows are Friday at 8:45 and 10pm, and Saturday at 5:30, 7:30, 8:45 and 10pm. Admission is $3.50.