

# BOOKS and REVIEWS

## The Mackerel Plaza

By Peter DeVries. 260 pp. Boston, Toronto, Little, Brown and Company. \$3.75.

Reviewed by ANN JACOBS

The Rev. Andrew Mackerel of People's Liberal didn't go into the ministry for money ("There's no jack in the pulpit"), but because he promised his dying mother he would become a clergyman. One there, he attacked his job with progressive zeal - battling traditionalists, street-corner evangelists, and miracles with his own uncertain theology of Biblical Freudianism.

His life was one of enlightened shepherding until shortly after the death of his wife, Ida May, when he fell in love again. The problem of how to wed a second wife while his first was still being eulogized is Mackerel's predicament and the gist of the book.

WHILE the Brownies plant a tree in honor of Ida May, a congregation member puts up a neon "Jesus Saves" sign to commemorate her, and the whole town plans a shopping center in her name, Mackerel meets his fiancée in dingy bars.

This book is funny in every possible way - in character, dialogue, situation and theme. Mackerel preaches sermons like you've never heard before, and is the only minister, fictional or otherwise, who could entertain church women for tea and find his cup of Old Fitzgerald mixed in with their cups of tea - Russian roulette with whiskey.

Those who enjoyed De Vries' gentle satire in "Comfort Me With Apples" and "The Tunnel of Love" will find the familiar devices working twice as well in "The Mackerel Plaza."

## Five Pens In Hand

By Robert Graves. 360 pp. New York. Doubleday. \$4.50.

Reviewed by BYRON FARWELL

Robert Graves' thirty - eighth book is a sampler of the many and varied types of writing in which this versatile and talented writer indulges. Included are lectures, essays, stories, poems and historical anomalies and an autobiographical chapter explaining why the author makes his home in Majorca.

Among the wide range of subjects which have interested Graves are "The diseases of Scholarship, clinically considered," in which he claims that the Ph.D. is "the plague of modern scholarship;" a lecture on "The White Goddess," in which he maintains that "the most important single fact in the

## The Way of The Conductor

By Karl Krueger. 244 pp. New York. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$3.95.

Reviewed by SALLY PARSONS

How many of us sitting in a concert hall have puzzled over the contortions of the man on the podium and wondered whether his gyrations - indeed his very presence - were absolutely essential to the presentation of music?

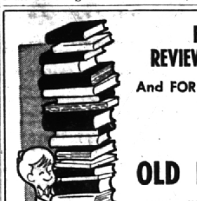
Karl Krueger, a well known conductor in his own right, has taken pen in hand to discuss the orchestra leader, "his origins, purpose, and procedures." His book is intended for the "musical amateur," but the layman may well find the sections dealing with musical history tough going because of their dry, outline form - all too reminiscent of text book writing.

A DISCUSSION of the origins of the orchestra and its evolution to the present day is paralleled by a study of the conductor-concept from the instrumentalist who led the small ensembles of the 17th and 18th centuries, through a period when two, or more players shared the direction, to today's situation wherein a single will and mind hold sway. Especially fascinating are the great contributions of the past. Krueger dwells in some detail upon the contributions of musical leaders from Handel and Bach all the way to Verdi and Wagner.

The section on techniques and procedures will particularly appeal to the average reader, for herein are involved the enigmas of the concert hall. We are informed of the time-beating function of the conductor's right hand and its responsibility for attaining precision and regulating the tension of orchestral sound.

THE LEFT HAND is held accountable for the intensification of individual parts, while the conductor's countenance and mere presence function as subtler agencies to bring forth the desired effect.

Krueger closes with a lengthy discussion of the way in which a conductor approaches and analyzes a composition in order to re-create as accurately as possible what the composer originally intended. Here, as elsewhere the author has the fault of being a trifle technical, but it is difficult in such a treatise to avoid technical terms.



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The reader should feel flattered that Krueger has not talked down to him; on the contrary, he has been willing to share with the amateur the exciting world of that controversial master musician who is at once a "dissecting surgeon" and a "synthesizing architect."

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