

MILDRED ALEXANDER OPENS TEACHING HEADQUARTERS IN SAN DIEGO

"Mint Julep" Opener
Heralds Surprises

Mildred Alexander, the "suhh'n chah-ma" whom 1966 ATOE conventioners recall with fondness for her fine performance at the Portland Oriental theatre's 3-13 Wurlitzer, has embarked on what she might call a *new life* -- if she were cueing a soap opera. To say that the Alexander departure from past patterns is radical, states the case too mildly.

For many years, "Millie" (as her husband, Bill Appleton, calls her) has been the leading exponent of a certain brand of plug-in organ from which she strayed only on rare occasions to play pipe concerts.

Now she has decided to *stray* more often. The first signs of budding revolt were noted during the 1968 Home Organ Festival when the little lady was heard often at consoles other than the long-associated brand. Many were puzzled. To some it even seemed sacrilegious. Then came the startling announcement.

Henceforth, Alexander teaching talents would not be confined to any one make of organ; Millie would teach and play on any good organ. While a handful of plug-in purists sizzled she stated that she would open an organ school on the West Coast and settle down -- after many gypsy years of living out of suitcases.

After much searching, the perfect site was located in San Diego, California, a rambling old multiple-room mansion built during the first years



MILLIE AMONG THE CRYSTAL BALLS, — A calculated risk with pipes a possibility. — Stufoto

of the century as a home for financier Horace B. Day. Mildred knew at once that "this was the place." It reminded her of *Tara* in that saga of another southern belle, and there is a resemblance. The home became available recently when Synanon moved out.

Although there have been a number of tenants since the demise of Mr. Day, there remains much of the former grandeur in the old manse, especially some sparkling crystal chandeliers.

Once the site had been selected and secured, Mildred started to build her staff (while decorating the house). She chose her long-time associates, Richard Bradley, as production manager and Jim Coons as business manager (all of the Alexander staffers are organists and teachers, right down to the cleanup crew -- even Millie's husband).

Mildred admits she shot the family bankroll on this venture, and then some. But the Appletons have faith in their gamble.

On November 24, they had their "grand opening" with an afternoon punch and mint julep party of invited guests, which included the press. Guests came from near and far and those who couldn't make the scene telegraphed their congratulations ... Eddie Dunstedter, for example.

Exploration revealed the building to be an excellent choice for a school, with large, light rooms, with acoustical separation that only old-style thick walls can provide. By opening time, Millie had managed to get at least a spinet playing in each of the studio rooms on the ground and second floors. And she had just accepted delivery of a good sized (and priced!) electronic for her concert room. Leroy Davidson played foreground and background music on it during the afternoon.

After the guests had partaken of the canapes, punch and music, Millie sprung her bombshell:



Millie's "Tara-under-the-palms."

"Y'see these here rooms here? They's just raht fo' chambahs. Ahm gonna have me a pahp awgin aftah we git the mawgidge daown a smidgeon. But first ah gotta ree-vahs all ma teachin' books so they'll applah to all tahps 'n makes of awgin."

We left her as she symbolically crossed out lines in one of her *Mildred Alexander Method* instruction books, possibly the chapter on how to execute a "palm schmear."

— Elmer Fubb, San Diego

Dan Barton Is Recovering From Accident

Oshkosh, Wis.—Helen Barton, wife of organbuilder Dan, has revealed that a recent accident plus flu and a kidney infection has combined to send Dan to the hospital in January.

Around Xmas time, Dan suffered a fall which resulted in two broken ribs and a badly mashed bone in his right hand. This prevented answering correspondence and resulted in a raft of inquiries. Dan's bones are healing nicely but the flu bug got him. Aftermath of the flu attack was a kidney infection which sent the venerable organ builder to the hospital.

Although he can't reply at present, Dan likes to hear from organ fans and now would be a good time for a get well card. Send them to Dan Barton, 736 Scott Avenue, Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901.