

# tambour battant

EXCERPT FROM LE TAMBOUR BATTANT

VOL. III, N° 1, FEBRUARY 4, 2011



## Biography

### Martha Trudeau (1862-1919) musician, teacher and founder of the *Beethoven Club*



Our research on Martha Trudeau<sup>1</sup>, founder of the **Beethoven Club** of Memphis Tennessee, was fruitful. Her father, Francois-Xavier Trudeau (1830-1867), known as FX, Frank and Francis, was Canadian born and in 1859 owner of a watch and jewelry trade in Memphis. On May 6, 1861, F.X. obtained a license to marry Louise (Louisa) Bauer (1838-1910), born in France of a German father (William Bauer) and a French mother (Louise Le Blanc). Particular fact, the license included a commitment by the groom and Mr. Rajoux - presumably a friend - of \$ 1 250, payable to Shelby County, Tennessee, if the union did not take place. The same day, Louisa Bauer's marriage confirmed her as resident of the State of Tennessee thus so invalidating the requirement. The Trudeau couple moved at 61 Linden St., above the shop of F. X. Trudeau & Co. Martha was born in 1862 and five years later, early 1867, Louise gave birth to their second daughter Mary. In November 1867, yellow fever took the life of Francis Xavier, he was 37 years old. Less than a year later, on October 29, 1868, little Mary died of congestion.

F. X. TRUDEAU & CO.,  
DEALERS IN  
**WATCHES, DIAMOND GOODS**  
SOLID SILVER WARE,  
Gold Chains, Clocks, Spectacles, Etc.,  
COR. MADISON AND SECOND STREET,  
**MEMPHIS, - TENNESSEE.**  
N. B. Memphis Mean Time accurately taken by the ONLY Transit in the City

Ad published in the directory *Halpin of Memphis, 1867-1868*

The widow of 29 years managed her husband's estate and was released five years later, in July 1872. Meanwhile for her living and that of her daughter, Louise became a seamstress working at home, moving often, a source of financial worries. The 1880 census for Cincinnati (Ohio) shows Martha Trudeau as a professional musician, boarding home at 165 Lawrence Street, Ms. Hannah Antenheimer's residence. The following year Martha went back to Memphis teaching piano at Miss Higby's High School and also directing the school musical.

<sup>1</sup> See: Le Tambour Battant, Vol. II, No. 3.



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In October 1888, Martha founded with three of her friends - Norma Duke, Annie Dwyer and Isabelle Getz - *Miss Trudeau's Quartet* which will become the **Beethoven Club**. A first concert took place at Martha's house on December 17 1889. In 1892, the Executive Committee adopted these rules :

*" This club is exclusively a women's club and every active member must be prepared to contribute to the [musical] animation... Any recruit who refuses to produce for a full year will lose her membership unless the reason of refusal is considered admissible by the executive committee. "*<sup>2</sup>

At that time, Martha Trudeau lived with her mother, Louise Bauer, at 29 Driver Street. Louise Bauer died of pneumonia in her house on Driver Street on February 28, 1910.

In 1915, Martha continues to chair the Beethoven Club and is considered a piano virtuoso who excels in all musical fields. She lives at the Woman's Society building in Memphis, home of the Beethoven Club. On April 6, 1919, at the age of 56, Miss Trudeau dies at Gartly Ramsey Hospital in Memphis where she had been hospitalized six months earlier. On her death certificate, Dr. Louis Leroy wrote that the cause of her death is liver cancer associated with breast cancer. The act is witnessed by Mrs. A. H. Wistner. The next day, Martha Trudeau is buried in **Elmwood Cemetery** in Memphis with her family, Lot 299, Turley Section.



Martha Trudeau 1862-1919  
Courtesy of **Elmwood Cemetery**

In an era where being an educated woman, an artist and entrepreneur was unusual, Martha Trudeau has made her mark, forming a large number of young musicians and creating one of the major musical organizations in North America. In 1920, the Beethoven Club's membership was over 2000. Since its founding by Martha Trudeau in 1888, the Beethoven Club has featured renowned concertists and formed new generations of musicians.

The **Association des Truteau d'Amérique** is proud to add the name of Martha Trudeau in its Biographical dictionary of personalities.

Louise Trudeau  
Charny, January 29, 2011

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