



**Junior Rhythm Band Set**

Sketch parts. In addition, the custom molding operation has included various automotive parts for Volkswagen of America, dog kennels for airlines, flowerpots, oil drain pans, waste-paper baskets and file folder holders.

“The local plant also has a blow-molding operation, a large spray painting area and a hot stamping facility.

“Strydel’s assembly operations include producing guitars, Smurf trumpets, chord organs, pedal and motorized cars and jeeps, toy wagons and wheelbarrows, small tractors, handles on pails, and bats and balls among others. The company employed an average of 145 people during 1982.”

In 1987, as Strydel celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the *Advance Reporter* noted, “Strydel primarily supplies plastic parts for Ohio Art toy lines, including Lil’ Sport, Etch A Sketch, Animator, etc., plus some automotive parts to Volkswagen of America and other diversified products for numerous other manufacturers. The assembly department is presently doing



**The Strydel, Inc., facility located at 201 Ellis Street in Stryker**

work for Volkswagen, plus assembling and packaging new Ohio Art toys such as Hoops, Horse, Kaleid A Sketch, Music Balls and various other toy products.”

On November 24, 2004, Ohio Art announced the sale of its Strydel Diversified Products Division to May & Scofield LLC of Fowlerville, Mich., an automotive parts supplier, to focus on its toy business and metal lithography operations. Ohio Art representatives said that when production of the Etch A Sketch was transferred to China in 2001, it no longer needed plastics components produced by Strydel.

May & Scofield ceased production at the former Strydel plant on March 24, 2005, for unknown reasons and closed the facility on April 1. At the time of closing, the plant employed 49 people.

*Brochure by Kevin M. Maynard and Bill Priest  
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**The Strydel/  
Emenee Story**



**Spudsie the Hot Potato**



Emenee Audion organ

For more than 40 years, the Strydel/Emenee plant was one of Stryker's leading industries, producing a wide variety of toys, automotive parts and other injection- and blow-molded parts and products.

Strydel was founded by Dr. Henry Kroeze, who emigrated from the Netherlands in 1953. In 1956, Dr. Kroeze and his wife Elizabeth started their then unnamed company with one compression molding press in a two-car garage in Waldron, Mich.

The Kroezes soon began producing Etch A Sketch parts, dart stems and dart pistols for the Ohio Art Company in Bryan. Their first assembly operation was placing suction cups on dart stems using a hand fed jig fixture; the company's first finished product was dart pistols.

In December 1962, Ohio Art and the Stryker Development Corporation convinced the Kroezes to relocate their operation to Stryker. The company's new name, "Strydel," was a contraction of "Stryker Development."

A 6.5-acre site was purchased west of Her-Mar Manufacturing (today occupied by the Quadco Rehabilitation Center) at the north

edge of Stryker. Ellis Street and utilities were extended to the site, where a 25,600-square-foot building was constructed at a cost of about \$125,000.

Strydel began its Stryker operations about June 1, 1963, with 40 employees. By December, employment had grown to 70, operating three shifts. The *Stryker Advance* newspaper reported that Strydel manufactured "plastic toys such as dart guns, jungle knives, animals for barnyard sets, small glasses for tea sets, parts for world globes, Etch A Sketch parts and other products." In 1963, Strydel's primary product was a chainsaw gas tank cap.

Ohio Art purchased Strydel's physical assets on December 14, 1962, and soon assumed management of the plant.

On August 25, 1965, the Strydel plant was struck by a tornado, causing \$110,000 in damage. Fortunately, the second shift employees on duty were not seriously injured. The plant was rebuilt, and its size was doubled.

Emenee Industries was organized in New York in 1949 to manufacture organs and toy musical instruments.

Ohio Art purchased 51 percent of Emenee's stock in May 1968, and the company's production was moved to Stryker, with Emenee's administrative offices located at Ohio Art.

In 1971, Emenee manufactured about 20 models of electrically operated reed organs, a dozen varieties of guitars, tambourines, rhythm band kits and other instruments. Emenee's plastic parts were primarily made by Strydel, with metal assemblies provided by Ohio Art or other suppliers.

Emenee's reed organ was the most sophisticated of its instrument line, with a three-octave floor organ and bench retailing for \$25

to \$40, depending on the model.

The plastic organ reeds were taken from the mold in tune to within 0.3 of a thousand vibrations per second. Six sets of reeds were used in the organs, operated by a keyboard with forced air blowing the reeds. The company was capable of molding about 1,800 sets of reeds per day in an air-conditioned room under carefully controlled conditions.

In 1969, when Emenee's production moved to Stryker, the local plant was again doubled in size. Later, a patio and warehouse were added to the west side of the building, bringing total work area to 137,420 square feet devoted to molding, assembly and warehousing.

On April 25, 1973, shareholders approved a merger of Ohio Art and Emenee, and Emenee ceased to exist as a separate entity.

In 1983, Ohio Art celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and Strydel marked its 20<sup>th</sup> year in Stryker. The *Advance Reporter* newspaper reported: "Strydel presently molds all plastic components for the Ohio Art toy line including jukeboxes, organs, guitars and Etch A



Emenee Silver Piano Accordion