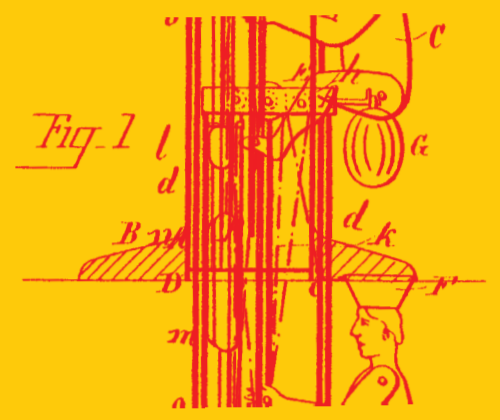


THE HISTORY OF TIN TOYS



Tin toys originated in the latter part of the 19th century. They are mechanical toys using a variety of drive mechanisms to power simple movements. More complex moving toys of this time and even earlier are generally described as "automata". Early automata were usually made in very small quantities, had ingenious complex movements, were expensive and were not really toys.



Not all tin toys are actually made of tin although the earliest ones were. Subsequently, as tin was expensive, it was replaced by cheaper materials such as thin sheets of rolled iron or steel. After the tin can was invented in the early nineteenth century, tin toys were often made from recycled food cans!



Ernst Paul Lehmann 1856-1934

Who Made These Tin Toys?

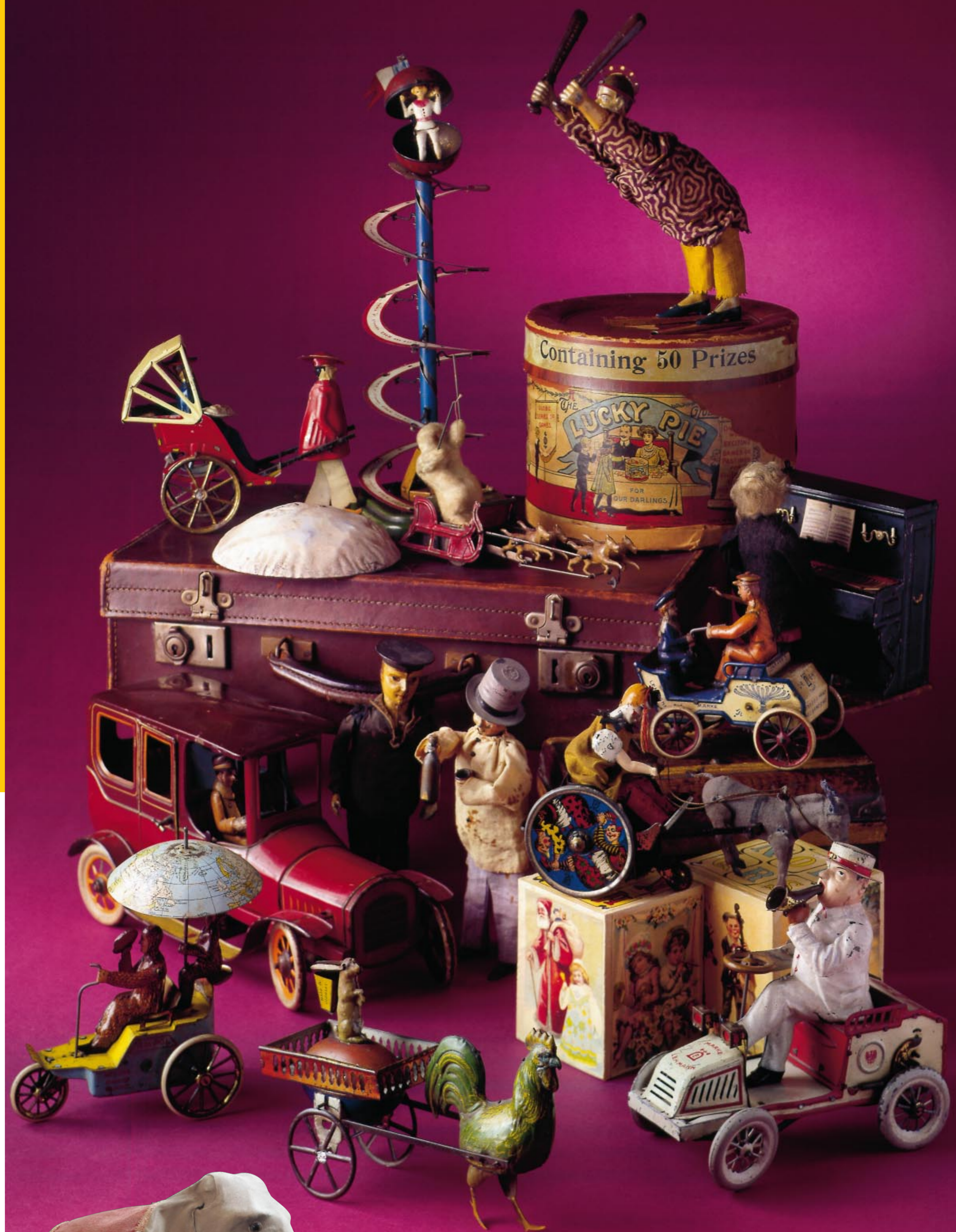
There were several manufacturers however two of the most well known are Ernst Paul Lehmann of Germany and Seraphin Fernand Martin of France. Martin manufactured in Paris from 1878 to 1912 when his business was sold although he remained as an advisor until his death in 1919. His toys were innovative and characterised by his selection of subject matter.

In particular, he produced a range of little people, Les Petits Bonshommes Martins, which were modelled on real life characters of his time.

Lehmann manufactured in Brandenburg, Germany from 1881 until 1948. Lehmann's toys were more novelty items than Martin's more typical characters. Over 100 different models were produced by Lehmann in the "Golden Age" of these toys which ended around 1920. After Lehmann's death in 1934, his cousin, Johannes Richter ran the business, re-establishing it in 1951 in Nuremberg.

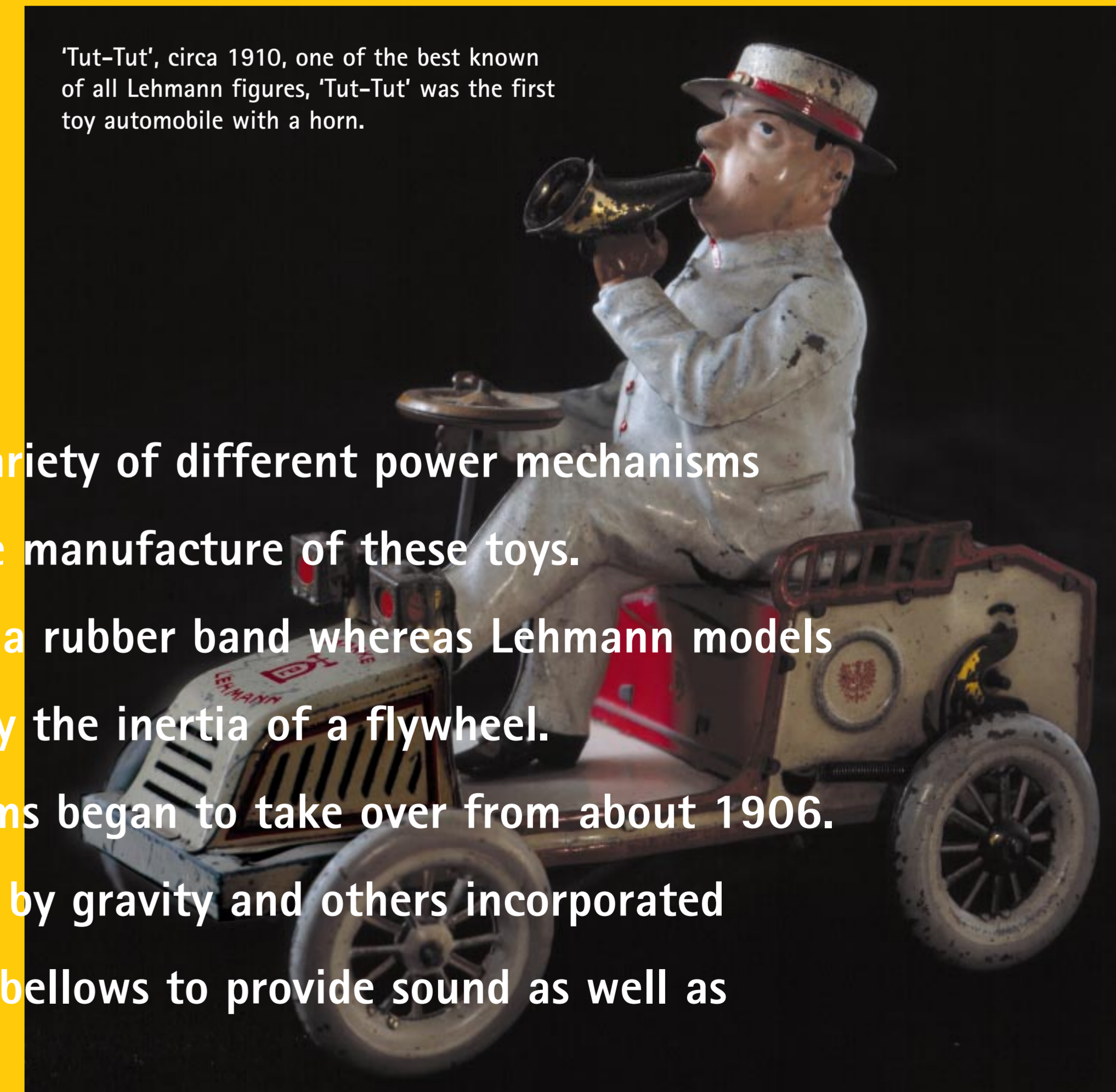


The Lehmann factory at Brandenburg



Roulet Et Descamps made a range of animals such as this elephant (circa 1895), whose movements were clockwork driven and very realistic.

'Tut-Tut', circa 1910, one of the best known of all Lehmann figures, 'Tut-Tut' was the first toy automobile with a horn.



There were a wide variety of different power mechanisms which were used in the manufacture of these toys.

Martin initially used a rubber band whereas Lehmann models typically were driven by the inertia of a flywheel.

Clockwork mechanisms began to take over from about 1906. Some toys were driven by gravity and others incorporated squeakers, growlers or bellows to provide sound as well as movement.

The toys were originally hand painted and then subsequently lithographic techniques were used to decorate them.