

How to play Cammeyer's "Sammy on Parade"

By Bernard Sheaff

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ALTHOUGH as a march it is quite of the conventional order, "Sammy on Parade" is one of the best solos of this type Cammeyer has written in many years.

The idea was inspired by the composer's witnessing the march through London of the first American Troops who landed here in 1917 *en route* for France. The whole solo was completed in less than an hour, and appeared in the *Banjo World* for September, 1917, and with piano and 2nd banjo parts a short time afterwards. The solo is now immensely popular with players of all styles.

The left-hand fingering and positions are very fully marked in the score, and should be strictly observed throughout. The first four bars constituting the introduction should be played boldly *ff* as marked. Alternately finger (R.H.) the two successive A's in bars 1 and 2 •••, and observe the method of sliding the third finger from F to G and back again as indicated in bars 3 and 4. Strongly accent the chord in bar 4, then play the next two bars very softly, or omit them altogether, if desired, when there is a piano accompaniment.

In second stave line, bar 6, the eighth P. chord is rather a long stretch, but the D should be held down (fourth finger) while the G and E are struck, then the third finger held down similarly on the C following, then slurred back to F (bar 7).

Commencing with the third stave line comes a short melody on the fourth string. Be certain to hold down these notes while accompanying chords are played *with first and second R.H. fingers*. Where there are four notes in a bar these may be alternately fingered with thumb and first finger always commencing - first note in the bar - with the thumb, which does the lion's share of the work, the first finger only being utilised to assist. Some players may prefer to use the thumb for these passages entirely and one way is as good as the other provided the phrases are not made to lose their rhythm. There are several instances in the other movements where the fourth string has very similar phrases assigned to it. The player will notice these at once in the short movement in A minor (which commences in stave six, bar 5), and also in the fanfare in the trio commencing at fifth stave (second page) bar 5. The same method of fingering should be used for all this fourth string work.

In staves five and six the positions in the various bars should all be carefully retained as marked, and where there is a note followed by an accompanying chord, hold the melody note down so that the tune sings and is distinctly prominent. The accompanying chords should be played with about half the strength of tone of the melody, but in bars 2 and 3, fifth stave, they may be slightly more marked, as there is a change of harmony.

The short movement commencing at bar 5, sixth stave, is easy to finger in spite of the accidentals, and all the chords and changes come under the fingers. The only change which some players may find awkward is in stave eight, bars 1 and 2. The easiest and best way of executing this movement is to let the fourth finger remain on the A throughout these two bars. Then place the third finger on F sharp (bar 2) as this note is required first, then while in the act of striking same, drop the first and second fingers on E flat and C to complete the chord. With a little careful practice this modulation can be made quite smoothly, and without the left hand being required to make a painful jump from one position to the other,

The trio—in F—starts on the second page. The melody on the third string is most effective and easy, but the positions and fingering must be carefully followed. Keep the left -hand fingers down on the strings throughout the bars in the first stave. Play the first two A's in the last bar •••.

Everything seems unmistakably clear now right to the bottom of the page, as there is a lot of repetition. Do not omit, however, to hold down the top notes in bars 1 and 2, fifth stave; and there are three or four instances of repeated notes on the first string in the fanfare, but the R.H. fingering in each case will, of course, be the same as bar 3 of the intro. at the commencing of the march.

In stave seven, bars 3, 4 & 5 hold the second string C down (first finger) until the last E is slurred to the fourth string G in bar 5. This is a similar phrase to that which occurs in the coda, bars 5, 6 & 7, and

the ascending semitones should be made prominent in each case.

The fact that the roll is introduced so frequently into this solo makes it important that the player should practice this effect until he is able to execute it in a completely masterful manner.

“Sammy on Parade” makes a splendid duet for two banjos, as will be seen by the gramophone record – one of a series – made by Mr Cammeyer and the writer for the Vocalin Gramophone Company, which record will be issued in May or June of this year.