



Music Notes

Wally Barnett

Wallace ‘Wally’ Henry Barnett was a 20th century American music educator, bandmaster, and composer. He was born May 23, 1916, in Evansville, Indiana. From 1934-1937, he studied at Phillips University in Oklahoma. In 1946, Barnett earned a Bachelor of Arts from Evansville College under George Dasch, who as well as teaching at Evansville College, was also the conductor of the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1948, Barnett earned his Master of Music under Walter Emch at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois. Wally Barnett then becomes a bandmaster in the Decatur Public Schools. He married Mary Lois Armor in 1943. He died in Decatur on the 24th of July 2005.

From the late 1970’s through the early 1990’s, he composed 36 compositions for the school band level. Most are solo percussion, either snare drum or mallets with piano. Some of these he composed with his wife, Mary Barnett. There is also one percussion trio, two percussion quartets, and two percussion quintets. *Drumbells*, published in 1982, is one of the percussion quartets.

Drumbells is written for orchestra bells, a high-pitched snare drum, a low-pitched snare drum, and a bass drum. In the beginning of the piece, the drums echo each other and play against the simple rhythm of the orchestra bell part, thus creating “drumbells.” In the middle section of the piece, the players all switch to cymbals or triangle to create an all-metallic sound to accompany the melody. The final section is reminiscent of the beginning and ends with a bang!

Sources: TEK Percussion Database and CCM (composers-classical-music.com)