In Memoriam Dresden

This piece by Daniel Bukvich (KPBSD 2014 Mass Band Clinician) is meant to replicate the atmosphere of the Dresden Fire Bombings by the Allied Forces that began on February 13th, 1945. These bombings killed as many as 135,000 people, and have been cited as the single most destructive bombing of the entire Second World War. One of the atrocities is that at the time of these bombings, Germany was already on the verge of surrender.

Prior to these bombings, Dresden had not been under attack in the same way that other German cities were. As opposed to being considered essential to the war effort, Dresden was much more of an arts and culture capital, being called "Florence on the Elbe". The destruction that was wrought upon Dresden was horribly damaging to all of the arts centers and churches that were in Dresden.

This piece has four movements, each of which signifies a different part of the attack.

I. Prologue – This movement establishes the mood of impending disaster, and presents the thematic material upon which the rest of the piece is based.

II. Seeds In The Wind – This movement refers to the method of "seeding" the bomb target with jellied gasoline and incendiaries. It also portrays the fury of the bombing attack as the bombs were dropped and the incendiaries began to light on fire.

III. Ave Maria – This movement reflects upon the religious and artistic heritage of Dresden and becomes a prayer for the victims of the attack. Eight square miles of the city were completely ruined.

IV. Firestorm – In this movement, the sounds of the "Fire Storm" are recreated. This is not only the dropping of more bombs, but also the horror of the gasoline and incendiaries that were previously dropped catching on fire. On Ash Wednesday (February 14th, 1945) the city center was burning at an estimated temperature of $2700^{o}F$. The fires burned for days after the bombing runs were finished. The total death count is somewhere between 35,000 and 135,000. The number is unknown due to the large number of refugees from the east.