

.... From the Salish Sea

The Salish Sea is the body of water off the south coast of British Columbia, Canada, and the north west coast of the United States, recently named to acknowledge the Coast Salish people who have lived there for thousands of years. It includes the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the Strait of Georgia, Puget Sound, the Canadian Gulf Islands and the American San Juan Islands.

The area is full of diversity, with small islands, narrow channels, international harbours, and wide straits, all of which are teeming with life. While on the Salish Sea, one can see all kinds of seabirds, otters, seals, eagles, salmon and whales.

From the Salish Sea begins with an six bar phrase that is reminiscent of traditional Coast Salish songs, part of which becomes a recurring element of the piece. The first section, with its' longer musical lines, captures the calm beauty of the area, with hints of sunlight sparkling on the water.

The middle section portrays the roiling waters of the tidal rip currents, or of fish boils that appear when small fish are chased to the surface by larger fish, then face the birds that come to feed on them as well. These boils will seem to suddenly appear, last for awhile as birds, seals and sometimes whales come to take advantage of the easy food, then just as quickly disappear.

The final section brings to mind the human occupants of the sea. With the many islands and coves it is home to small runabout boats, sail boats, large yachts, native war canoes and many kinds of fishing boats. The straits within the sea are shipping channels for container ships on their way to Vancouver or Seattle. There is an energy to this last section in its' underlying rhythmic figure which moves through the different instruments. The final few bars, ending in the D major chord are meant to express how being on the Salish Sea on a bright summer's day, can lift's my heart, and carry me through the dark days of winter.