

## Oliver Leith - Good Day Good Day Bad Day Bad Day (2020)

Written by bluesever (Bogdan Marszałkowski)  
Friday, 26 February 2021 16:21 -

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Oliver Leith  
and the good day bad day bad day  
George Barton & Siwan Rhys

*1 Good Day Good Day Bad Day Bad Day Part 1 6:44 2 Good Day Good Day Bad Day Bad Day Part 2 2:08 3 Good Day Good Day Bad Day Bad Day Part 3 4:46 4 Good Day Good Day Bad Day Bad Day Part 4 4:26 5 Good Day Good Day Bad Day Bad Day Part 5 5:51 6 Good Day Good Day Bad Day Bad Day Part 6 9:41 7 Good Day Good Day Bad Day Bad Day Part 7 2:16 8 Good Day Good Day Bad Day Bad Day Part 8 8:31* Ensemble – GBSR Duo  
Percussion – George Barton Piano, Keyboards [Electric Keyboard] – Siwan Rhys

A unique and extraordinary 45-minute composition for piano & keyboards + percussion, written for the GBSR duo: George Barton & Siwan Rhys. Composed in 2018, and recorded in March 2020 by Mark Knoop. ---anothertimbre.bandcamp.com

Damn this is a good title. It feels self-explanatory and yet it keeps you listening for a deeper meaning behind it. As such, it matches the music perfectly as each successive movement adds a layer of sentiment that hovers close to wistful melancholy, gently rocking itself into more troubled depths. Oliver Leith's good day good day bad day bad day is a forty-five minute duet for percussion and keyboard, played here by the GBSR duo: George Barton and Siwan Rhys. A keenly observed ambiguity presides over the piece, not least in the sounds themselves: a mixture of samplers and instruments such as the waterphone blur the lines between each musician's role, when heard on record. The inventive use of instrumentation adds depth and complexity, while the duet form of the piece gives clarity. Together, they manage to combine the bright and the plaintive into an indivisible whole. It feels like a piece that will continue to grow and change for the listener, even as a single recording.

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This is Leith's longest work to date yet its musical language is more direct (compared to the handful of pieces heard to date). There's a simplicity that appeals to the listener in the manner of the populist wing of the minimally modern composers, but with an emotional sophistication which just deepens with each successive listen, where so many others would quickly wear themselves out. The piece does not necessarily get darker as it proceeds, just more sweetly inextricable in the complexity of its mood. The piece welcomes you in as it refuses to explain itself, like a favourite love song that gratifies your need for sadness. At the first performance, Barton and Rhys played on stage surrounded by domestic furniture, as though in their living room, "a private thing, a home space, some mugs, a rug, maybe a lamp in the middle of a concert hall." The two musicians play with an evenness and interior calm that makes the music's formal structure and changes in instrumentation flow naturally without apparent effort. They make it all seem inevitable, even as the outcomes remain unknown, with a transparency that makes their playing inseparable from the music. ---Ben Harper, cookylamoo.com

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