

The Best Day Ever

by Mike Dana

Commissioned by and Dedicated to the Jazz Education Network

For Jazz Ensemble:

**Alto Sax 1*
Alto Sax 2*
Tenor Sax 1*
Tenor Sax 2
Baritone Sax
Trumpet 1*
Trumpet 2*
Trumpet 3
Trumpet 4
Trombone 1*
Trombone 2
Trombone 3
Bass Trombone
Guitar
Vibes
Piano*
Bass*
Drums***

***minimum required instrumentation**

For the Director

Overview

The Best Day Ever is a relaxed, sometimes almost floaty contemporary swing chart. Unusual phrasing, a simple melodic line, and some harmonic surprises will keep your students (and audiences) engaged. It works well with reduced instrumentation (see below) and can feature any soloist (see below) plus your drummer. Ranges are very reasonable, and rhythm section parts are notated. This would be an ideal opener or middle chart for your festival set.

Flexible Instrumentation

This chart was written to work with limited instrumentation; the minimum is 2 altos, tenor, 2 trumpets, trombone, piano, bass, and drums. Of course, it will sound even better with a full big band. To ensure that the various chords are complete, there are spots with cues for the missing (or soloing) instruments (brass, mm. 45-52, trombones mm. 94-97.) These cues should only be played if the instrument referenced is missing or soloing.

Groove/Feel/Rhythm Section

The basic feel is a relaxed, floaty contemporary swing. That said, there are also some shifts to a half-time, light funk-ish feel (mm. 23-26, 45-60) and a heavier half-time groove for the drum solo (mm. 62-78.) The rhythm section needs to think about where to be light and where to dig in. Drums, keep the ride rhythms loose on the swing sections, and don't let the snare get too big (check out the cross stick suggestions.) IMPORTANT: the phrasing of this chart is not the typical 4- or 8-bar length—it's more asymmetrical. Make sure everyone "feels" these unusual phrases (especially drums!)

Rehearsal Suggestions

Make sure the rhythm section is comfortable on the main "chunks" of the chart: a) the rhythmic ostinato "hook" (mainly mm. 1-9, 86-101), b) the lighter half-time swing/funk solo section mm. 23-26, 45-60), and c) the heavier half-time swing/funk drum solo section (mm. 62-78.) On this chart, it's a good idea to work with the rhythm section first, before adding the winds. There is a lot of "scoring across sections" here, so make sure students know who they are doubling lines with (this includes doubling with the rhythm section.) Get the part to the piano player in advance (there are a lot of notes, but also a lot of repetition!) And yes, there are NOTES for the guitar player! ☺

Make sure that the students know when they have the main melody, an interesting countermelody, or a supportive (long notes or repeated figures) harmonic part—in other words, fore-, mid-, and background. Balance accordingly. I quiz my students about this all the time...(“What’s the most important thing at measure 82?”) Keeps them on their toes.

Solos

The included solo sheets (for all instruments) have a sample solo, but I hope you’ll encourage your students to try improvising. The solo section uses only 2 main chords, Gm7 and Eb Maj7. Both of these are from the tonal center of Bb, so beginning improvisers can start there. The solo sheets include scales, arpeggios, and some other cool ideas and tips that I hope will help your soloists on their journey.

Program Note

Very often, composers are asked where the title of a piece comes from. And, very often, we don’t have a clue. For this chart, though, I can tell you exactly where the title came from. I was having a really fantastic day. I’d just received an email asking me if I would be interested in this commission. (I was!) There was no traffic, and I got great parking places. Our new espresso machine was delivered. I even found \$20 in the dryer. When I sat down to start writing that evening, this chart was just there, in my head. There was no doubt about the title: “The Best Day Ever.” I hope you and your band enjoy it!

Mike Dana, September 2018

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THE BEST DAY EVER

COMPOSED/ARRANGED BY MIKE DANA

RELAXED CONTEMPORARY SWING ♩ = 142

ALTO SAX 1

ALTO SAX 2

TENOR SAX 1

TENOR SAX 2

BARITONE SAX

TRUMPET 1

TRUMPET 2

TRUMPET 3

TRUMPET 4

TROMBONE 1

TROMBONE 2

TROMBONE 3

BASS TROMBONE

GUITAR

VIBRAPHONE

PIANO

BASS

DRUMS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

THE BEST DAY EVER P. 2

10

AS 1

AS 2

TS 1

TS 2

BARI.

TP1 1

TP1 2

TP1 3

TP1 4

TBN 1

TBN 2

TBN 3

Bs TBN

GTR

VIB

PNO

Bs

DRS

RELAXED 2 FEEL
LIGHT RIDE

CYM FILLS

10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

27

[illegible]

THE BEST DAY EVER P. 4

THE BEST DAY EVER P. 5

This page of the musical score contains the following staves and parts:

- AS 1
- AS 2
- TS 1
- TS 2
- Bar.
- TPT 1
- TPT 2
- TPT 3
- TPT 4
- TBN 1
- TBN 2
- TBN 3
- Bs Tbn
- GTR
- Vib
- PNO
- Bs
- DRS

The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'mf' and 'Fill'. The page is numbered 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, and 44 at the bottom.