

## **BJA NEWSLETTER WRITERS' GUIDELINES**

For general style and format, please read a couple of archived issues before writing.

### **Formatting and Grammar**

1. One space at the end of each sentence.
2. Use dashes, not hyphens, for dashes. Here is a hyphen - Here is an "m" dash — (it equals three hyphens).
3. Italicize titles of albums, television series, books, movies, plays: e.g., *Kind of Blue*.
4. For songs and individual TV episodes, put the title between quotation marks: e.g., "All Blues."

### **Style and Content**

1. Use surnames, not first names, when writing reviews, articles, profiles. Please check the spelling of all names and titles.
2. Be specific about dates and time periods. For example, don't say a band has been together "for some time;" if possible, find out precisely how long and say that.
3. Most of our readers are not musicians; therefore, avoid musical jargon unless you can explain it in simple terms.
4. Avoid overuse of the word "jazz." All the musicians we write about play jazz, so there's no need to call them jazz musicians repeatedly.
5. Do not borrow copy from websites without credit. Do not take the bulk of material for an artist profile or article from an artist's website. For artist profiles, please interview and quote the artist. Reviews of performances should be mostly about the music, not about the food or other ancillary features.
6. Title every article; we will change it if we find it inappropriate, but a title helps the reader and the writer know what the article is about.
7. When writing about jam sessions, report how it is run. For example, is there a sign-up sheet? How many tunes does each participant perform? A good model may be found in the February/March 2016 issue.
8. Avoid clichés. Examples: "The bottom line is, it was a great performance." "They avoided the melody like the plague."
9. Try not to repeat the same adjectives or adverbs over and over.
10. We are trying to support local musicians, so avoid cruel or personal criticisms; conversely, avoid gushy praise.