

WRITER'S GUIDELINES – CONCERT REVIEW

The aim of a concert review is to generate readers' interest in and understanding of the performing artists and the venues, so they will be more likely to attend future concerts by those artists and/or future concerts at that venue, or to purchase CDs by the artists. If your article makes the concert sound like it was exciting and special, readers who didn't attend may be motivated not to miss the next one!

So keep it positive! If the performance was really mediocre, then we probably won't publish a review of it. If there were some aspects of the performance that you felt could be improved, be honest about it. But for the most part, focus on the most impressive and enjoyable aspects of the concert – as YOU perceived it. The review will reflect your own personal response to the music—but recognizing that different audiences will have different tastes. You shouldn't review a concert by artists that you don't really like all that much. On the other hand, if you are a huge fan, restrain yourself from writing extravagant, gushy adjectives of praise.

Begin by reviewing the website and Facebook pages of the artist(s) and the venue. You may want to listen to some recordings by the performers (via YouTube or their websites). Then peruse past BJA concert reviews to get a sense of how other writers have handled this type of article.

Certain information needs to be in the article – but how it's presented is up to you as a writer. You should open with some image or idea that will capture readers' attention – which is likely NOT to be a simple recital of factual information.

You should find some overarching theme that governs your review – for example, something about the nature of the music or the selections played, or the way that the performers interacted with each other and with the audience. It isn't necessarily the best approach to simply describe each tune in the order it was played, and you don't necessarily have to talk about every tune on the program.

If there is some lead performer, you probably want to give most attention to that performer, while not neglecting to say something about each of the other performers. If the concert includes originals by any band members, you should focus on those tunes in particular.

If the concert focuses on a particular genre of jazz, you may want to do some research into the background of that genre. Likewise, the concert may be a "tribute" to a particular jazz artist, so you would do some background research on that artist.

Include some brief description of the venue – the "vibe" or atmosphere – and something about the audience and their response to the music.

Include factual information somewhere in the article: Date the concert took place, its venue, and the names of all the performers. Near the end, state where they are performing again in Baltimore in the next few months (as much as you can determine - -keeping in mind that our

newsletter comes out only quarterly). And/or you might note what other jazz artists will be performing at that venue in the coming two or three months (don't make a lengthy list).