

WRITER'S GUIDELINES – VENUE REVIEW

Draft 2 (9/25/18)

Unfortunately, while we have many readers who say they love jazz, not so many of them are going out to hear jazz. So the aim of reviewing a venue is to make it sound like an appealing place to go out and hear live jazz and to let people know what to expect.

Start by perusing the Facebook page and website of the venue. Also peruse past BJA newsletter articles reviewing venues to get ideas.

Then you should GO to the venue to hear one of the jazz performances that are typical or regular. You may want to contact the venue owner or manager in advance to let them know that you are coming to do a review, and you may get filled in on some information in advance.

For a venue review, your main focus is not the particular performance that you attend. You should say something about the musicians who are performing, but also name other jazz performers on the schedule. Neither the venue's website or its Facebook page may give complete information about their live music, so you should provide missing information --the days and times that jazz performances happen there, and if there is a cover charge. They may not even state who is performing on any given date, so you might want to search Facebook to find who is performing at the venue in the upcoming few months (keeping in mind that by the time the article appears in the newsletter, many of the shows will have already passed). Describe how the performers fit into the atmosphere of the venue.

Use your creativity in capturing the "vibe" of the place. Is it a down-home neighborhood hang-out? Upscale cabaret? Quirky, artsy bistro? This will involve some focus on seating, lighting, décor, etc. Don't go on and on; just choose a few telling details that capture the essence of the place. For example, white tablecloths and candles, fresh flower bouquets.

Ideally, you'll have a drink and a meal there, too, to say something about the culinary offerings. What is the nature of the menu – "comfort" food, ethnic, eclectic? —although you're NOT writing as a food critic, and readers can usually find the menu on the venue's website.

We should give useful information about the venue – how to find it, where to park, etc. (Of course, you should first refer readers to the venue's website and/or Facebook page.) For example, take The Elk Room. There is a little map on the website. But it would still be hard to find the venue unless you know that first you locate a club called Tagliata facing on Fleet Street, then go through the open arcade to the rear and then on the left, find a black door with a little red window. Or you might let readers know that the best parking for Germano's is in the Little Italy garage at Trinity & Exeter, for \$5.00.