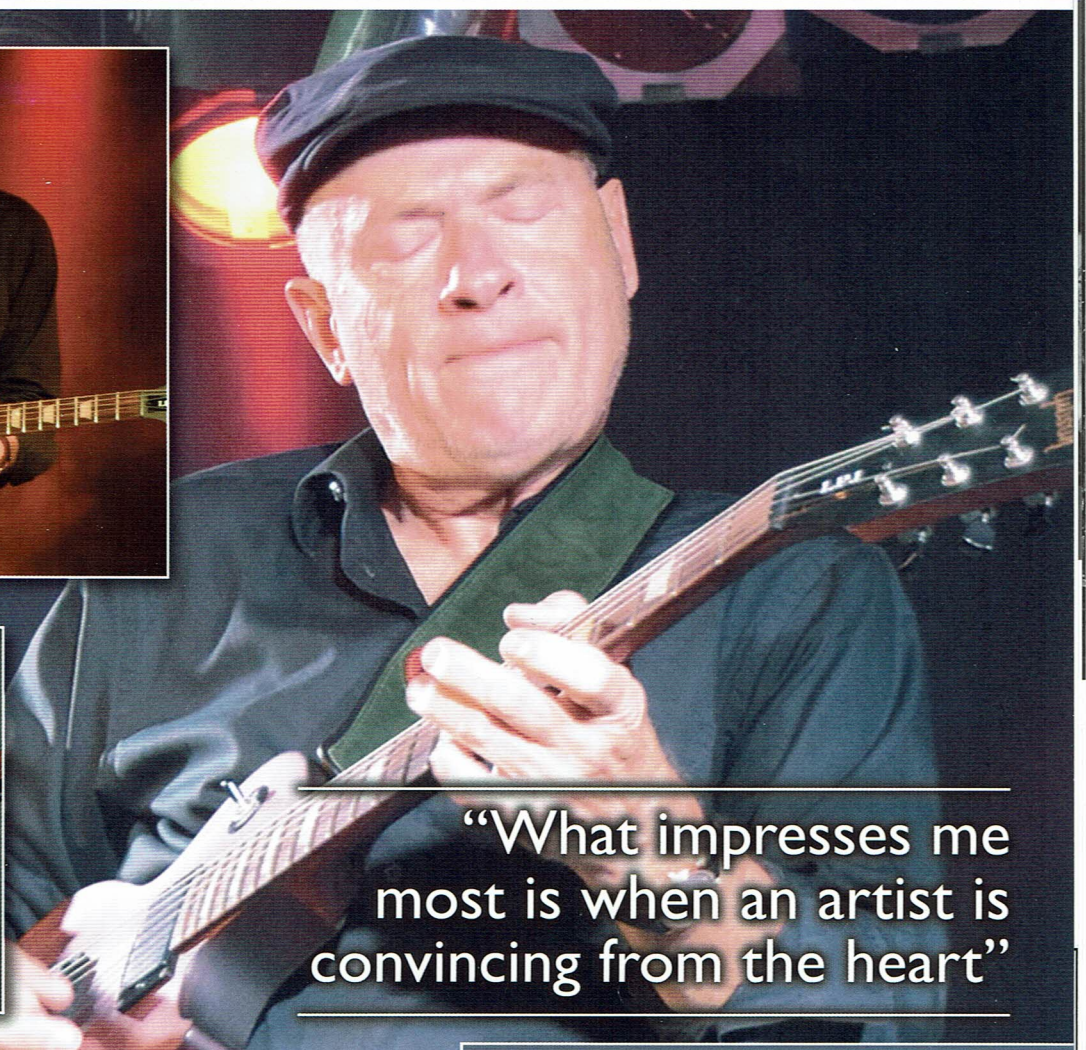


# KEY TO THE HIGHWAY



“What impresses me most is when an artist is convincing from the heart”

## Jim Kahr

### Mr. 'Go To' Guitar

I was grateful that Jim had taken time out to talk to Blues In Britain, as I have to admit, for my sins, until I was asked to do this interview, I hadn't heard of Jim Kahr, so I posed the question and Jim replied “I was born and bred in Chicago on the Southside. I started hangin' around Black ghetto blues clubs at the age of 17. By the time I turned 18, I was already hired, becoming a regular guitarist fixture around town with renowned Blues artists. I performed early in my career for primarily black audiences, regarded as the 'blue eye soul brother' I got the stage nickname of Jimmy 'guitar' Kahr. Growing up my big influences were: Otis Rush, Wes Montgomery, Albert King, John Lee Hooker, Little Milton and Lightnin Hopkins.”

Jim has a great resume and has played with or backed some real icons of the early Chicago blues era. After relocating to California, he again became the 'go to' man, “Yes, out in LA I did recordings with John Lee Hooker & Joe Cocker (*Free Beer & Chicken* album), Jimmy Rogers & Freddie King (*Gold Tail Bird* album). I was very active in the California scene. I performed regularly with my own band and artists like Charlie Musslewhite and John Lee Hooker.” All of which must have given rise to some great stories from the road. I wondered if there were any that he could legally tell us

remember backing legendary Grammy award winning artist Koko Taylor (female blues vocalist) down in Memphis. Driving down there from Chicago we'd stop for a bite to eat. I had to go in and order food to go since they wouldn't serve blacks along the way. When we arrived in Memphis ready to rehearse for the big show event with local black musicians, the next episode occurred. After setting up for the rehearsal sound check, the local musicians packed up their instruments and left saying.....we're not performing blues with some “white boy”. Koko's manager instantly called

non-musicians replacement. The next crew who showed up were fine and played well and the show was a success!”

Talking about a dream band (living or dead) to tour with Jim says “fortunately, I've toured and worked with most of my favourites like the Bobby Blue Bland orchestra. He's one of the greatest Blues singers of all time. BB King even idolised him from the Memphis scene. Around Chicago, I was the regular guitarist in the house band at the famous Wise Fools backing many legendary Blues icon artists, like Buddy Guy, Muddy Waters, Sunnyland Slim and Junior

#### Gigs

Solo

Sun 23: The Bell Inn, Bearstead

Band

Sat 15: Blues Club, Redcar

Tue 18: Ain't Nothin But..., Kingly Street, London W1B