



# MUSIC CONNECTION

## James Howard

BB King's  
Los Angeles, CA

### The Players:

James Howard, guitar, vocals  
Paul Feia, bass  
Doug Freedman, drums  
David Kaffinetti, keys

### Review by Bernard Baur

Live Reviews Editor  
Music Connection Magazine

**Material:** If you combined the guitar styles of Stevie Ray Vaughn and Jimi Hendrix you would produce the likes of James Howard. A guitarist extraordinaire, he mixes the intensity of Stevie Ray with the passion of Hendrix and plays some of the meanest blues this side of the Mississippi.

For this show Howard did mostly originals and threw in a few well chosen covers. His approach to the material is traditional, but his attack is unique. Although some may find a bit too much SRV in him, he does balance this obvious influence with enough of his own personality to make it interesting. There wasn't any particular song that stood out, but his playing was so strong it drew you in anyway. His cover choices, on the other hand, were very well done.



Photo by Bernard Baur

James Howard: Simply awesome

**Musicianship:** Like all real blues-men, Howard felt the songs he played and projected his emotions through his fingertips. This ability to communicate with his guitar boosted even average material to a higher level and made it something special. The music was mostly instrumental- but Howard did sing now and then, though they weren't the emphasis of his show. His band consistently played up to his level, making for a very strong presentation.

**Performance:** Howard was the man upon whom all eyes settled, and he was more than deserving with an animated, energetic and intense performance. It was a breathtaking exhibition, in fact, and one that pushed the crowd to the edges of their seats. This was definitely a performer who knew how to please an audience.

**Summary:** Although Howard may be derivative, he takes his phenomenal blues to places others have not, making the music his own. He has what it takes to bring the blues up to the next level and most definitely deserves attention from the A&R community.