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# Daily News

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## take 5 What's happening

### ► music

#### Innovative chanteuse

From our Next Big Thing file, meet chanteuse Susan James.

It's not as if this strikingly innovative singer-guitarist came out of nowhere, though. Four years ago, the Grateful Dead's Bob Weir was so taken with James that he hired her as the opening act for his side band's national tour. The following year, Lindsey Buckingham did the same.

Some of the names mentioned in relation to James include PJ Harvey, Joni Mitchell and Tori Amos. Her deconstructions of the Byrds' "Eight Miles High," David Bowie's "Heroes" and the Beach Boys' "Sail On Sailor" have been known to bring down the house.



Singer-guitarist Susan James opens for former X man John Doe on Saturday at the Ash Grove in Santa Monica.

James, who opens for former X man John Doe on Saturday at the Ash Grove in Santa Monica, boasts a multi-octave vocal range that could be the result of a brush with operatic training.

On her latest album, "Shocking Pink Banana Seat," James, a Pasadena native, wrote all the songs, played the guitars and co-produced. Yet another former member of X, D.J. Bonebreak, played drums on the disc and is part of James' live band, along with bassist Dan Brownfield.

The Ash Grove is at 250 Santa Monica Pier, Santa Monica. Show times are 8:30 and 10:30 p.m., and admission is \$15. Information: (310) 656-8500.

— Fred Shuster