

# Topanga Messenger

## “Idle Hands” Blues Band Works Like the Devil

November 3, 2011 - By Ali Murtaza

Idle Hands warmed up the packed house at The Canyon Club in Agoura Hills on Oct. 20, as the first of two opening bands for Leon Russell, rocking the stage with their blues to the delight of an audience there to see Russell.

What began some ten years ago with Paul Van Duine and a group of hopefuls became nothing less than pure fantasy to open for one of their idols.

In the late 90s, the British band, The Godfathers, took the stage with their song “Birth School Work Death,” and the words “the devil makes work for idle hands,” raging through the amplifiers. Paul Van Duine heard the words and a band was born.

Since then, Idle Hands has been a revolving door for members, as is often the case with most bands in LA, but Van Duine stuck with it through thick and thin, keeping the original skeletal hand logo that inspired the album cover for “Idle Hands.”

The current band members, most of them music teachers, have never been happier to follow the lead of Van Duine, the nucleus that these electrically charged musicians circle around. They make it clear that he is the heart and soul of the band, but Van Duine, incessantly pacing before the show, has only praise for them.

At 5 p.m., the band began setting up, while drummer Chris Spilsbury battled LA traffic. When he finally arrived, he received sympathetic nods and stories of nightmare traffic from his mates. Van Duine offered him a drink, and the show went on as scheduled, at 7 p.m. sharp.

After losing his original band mates, Van Duine ran into songwriting duo Megan Geraghty (vocals) and Vince White (lead guitar) who had been playing all over town. When the opportunity arose, says White, “we decided to go with a full-on band because we had done the duo thing and done it well.”

It wasn’t an easy transition. Van Duine’s songs had to go through minor transformations to fit the new female vocals.

“Since they were not my songs,” says Geraghty, “I connected with some more than others.” Fortunately for her and the band, when she’s on stage, she owns the songs.

Geraghty and White have been song-writing partners for quite some time for their duo act. Now, the three look forward to writing music together for years to come.

“I’d like to work more into rock,” White says. “We have started to venture a bit into rock after rocking the blues.”

The three are “the heart of the band,” says Geraghty, since they have been the steadiest members in the recent years.

Spilsbury, who has his own band, Heart of Gold, is not a constant in the band. Jon "Bermuda" Schwartz, another drummer for Idle Hands, shares his talents with Weird Al and was on tour with Weird Al, after his latest album release, "Apocalypse."

Bassist Larry DiPeppe completes the band. He was fortunate enough to touch Leon Russell's bass settings and live to tell the tale. He told it very well. DiPeppe, who is being courted by the band to be a regular member, juggles his time between a family-owned Italian restaurant that has been around for 29 years, a part-time music instruction gig and the band. He sees this as an opportunity to get a "second wind" for his music career, and says he is "having a blast, and just enjoying" himself.

The crowd was happy to see them as they exited the stage on time, making room for the next opening act, Jenny-O, and then the headliner, Leon Russell.

The Canyon Club and its staff, as well as the musicians, left satisfied. In addition to the crowd of about 1200, Russell brought in another fifty people coming late just to see him. As promised, he rocked the house as he always does.

More about the band and listings of upcoming Idle Hands shows can be found online at [www.idlehandslive.com](http://www.idlehandslive.com) and on FaceBook. CDs and merchandise are available at their concerts where you will most likely find a family member manning the desk.