

# Liquid Blue

GOING GREEN!

Story By Ian Kirby



Thankfully, the focus on social responsibility in the world of events continues to increase. One major facet of this trend are "Green" events, something American Entertainment Magazine hopes to focus on more in the future. For suggestions, please contact us.

Politics and religion are two subjects we like to keep generally away from our events environments and most recently global warming seems to be the most intensely inflammatory eco-subject. What everyone should keep in mind is that no matter which per-

spective you ascribe to on the topic of global warming, the fact is there are many other factors we control that affect our environment. Water and air pollution, litter, responsible food choices and energy conservation are all important to us in environmental, economic and social issues.

So the fact is, whether global warming is real or not, we should care about the environment and do the best we can to minimize our impact on it. This leads us to the subject of entertainment.

When artists do their job, they are inherently eco-unfriendly. This isn't necessarily their fault; the actual performing of their craft isn't the problem, it's all the tangential requirements such as travel, electricity, waste, etc. Events are generally responsible for tons of carbon emissions through all the people traveling to them via fossil fuels. There are enormous amounts of electricity consumed through backline and usually a huge amount of food waste and trash.

Of course we're not suggesting that events be eliminated, they are far too important on motiva-

tional, messaging and relations fronts. We also aren't suggesting that all of your attendees backpack from home to the event site where you spend the time picking up garbage and planting trees (though you have my permission to use elements of the concept)!

What we do want everyone to do is simply be conscious about the need for conservation and innovative thinking, and a great place to start is an acclaimed act that is certified "Green." They have found and will discuss some unique means

of being "Green" that most of us haven't thought of.

Liquid Blue is a band familiar to our regular readers and many of the talent buyers in the corporate, private, special events, performing arts and college markets. Their primary claim to fame is the record setting 100 plus countries they have performed in, giving them the title of "World's Most Traveled Band." They are truly international and have mass appeal, performing about half of their dates in public venues across the world. They were seen by millions worldwide performing at the kickoff concert for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Summer Games and have given nearly 2000 performances.

Officially certified by the County of San Diego's Department of Environmental Health Division as a "Green Business" (there is no specific designation for entertainment acts), talent buyers can be assured of Liquid Blue's commitment to making sure everything they do, both inside their professional capacities and in all their own personal lives (down to the food they eat) is in the most ecologically friendly manner.

There are many eco-techniques Liquid Blue touts and wants to share, but first the band's mastermind and business manager, Scott Stephens tells us a little bit more about the act. "We're an international recording and touring act publicly, but we also have a heavy focus on private and special events," Scott says. "We perform both originals and about 600 covers. We have been named 'America's Best Dance Band' and were proud to be featured on the cover of this magazine in 2008."

The standard format for the band is seven members which includes three female singers (the renowned Blue Girls) and three male lead singers. "With six out of seven of us able to sing various leads, we have a lot of range and flexibility. We also have a horn section that is typically a three-piece but can go from one to five-pieces."

Liquid Blue can also pare down to just two members for intimate sets. "We can play acoustically or play full band shows with just four musicians plus one singer." The band splits its time between public and

private events. "I'd say it's about 50/50," he says. "We usually tour out of the country for three to four months of the year, though we are scaling back some of our international dates and focusing more on the markets back home in the United States. Overall though, it's a pretty even split."

Coming back around to the topic of being a "Green" band, Scott gets passionate and excited, being an eco-activist and member of The Sierra Club for many years. "Many of our band members have been interested in and concerned about our environment for years. I have been a member of The Sierra Club since the 1980s and this is something I was involved with long before I even started Liquid Blue."

Clearly this isn't just a business or marketing ploy for Liquid Blue, who were putting good eco practices into effect before it was the "in" thing to do. "Even before anyone began certifying businesses as 'Green,' we were doing many of the things we do now. When it came down to getting our certification, we were overqualified and didn't have to meet any additional requirements. It is because

we have a genuine concern for the environment. 'Green' has become a very vogue issue nowadays and everyone is trying to go 'Green,' which is great. I hope everyone does get on the bandwagon. If it helps clean up the environment the smallest bit, it's all worth it."

Some of the specific techniques Liquid Blue utilizes are the obvious ones; LB uses solar power for their offices and studio and only energy efficient appliances. They recycle, conserve water (no bottled), eat organic foods, use native Californian low-water landscaping and even a few more creative ideas others might want to share. "One thing I think isn't talked about enough is Socially Responsible Investing. I know there are probably many affluent people who read your magazine and many of them are very conscious of the environment and social issues. When it comes time to invest their money however, most folks don't think about exactly where that money goes or what it's doing while other people are using it. We tend to focus on our numbers and returns, not what is returning (or losing) our money. In my opinion, where people put their money is probably the most significant vote they make in our society and making the right decisions can make a huge impact on our world and environment. The field of SRI is made up of a number of companies that screen investments, mutual funds and stocks. They take a look at the company or project and find out if they have any pollution violations, personnel violations, are they invested in war, etc. The person participating in SRI can choose just which areas they'd like to avoid or invest in and I think it is incredibly effective. Good companies with good values thrive; those who are screened out are done so by cause. At least a person knows exactly what their money is going into."

Another big (and more obvious) tactic is solar energy. "We feel that solar energy, of course, is very important and I think the really significant development is the evolution of electric vehicles. We are already on the waiting list for the new Nissan Leaf and we are very excited. We have put our deposit down and can't wait, because it will be the first mass produced all-electric car that almost anyone can afford." Base retail will start at \$25,000 after tax



credits. "Hybrids will be a thing of the past soon and things will be going all electric, no one will be interested in the typical combustion engine setup we have now and that is exciting and a great thing for our planet."

This is of course provided that people don't charge their all electric cars with coal-fired power, a huge polluter which is terribly destructive and dangerous to mine. Nuclear power we won't get into, but make the conversion of your home (and office) to solar and you have really jumped ahead of the curve. Imagine employees who could show up to their solar powered jobs in their electric cars, and charge their vehicles back up right there in the parking lot while working!

Liquid Blue performs at all sorts of venues from performing arts centers to fairs and festivals around the country. "We play such a wide variety of venues I have to look at any given current schedule to say what 'type' of date we're playing. We have a large enough repertoire that we can run the entire gamut including a few theme shows. We are extremely well suited for private and corporate events but we do many public events where we play more of our own music along with our favorite covers.

"We were just in Philadelphia at a casino, a festival in Phoenix before that and the Belly-up Tavern in San Diego for the kickoff of the San Diego 'Green' Chamber of Commerce. They will have that focused exclusively on 'Green' business. "We were at the House of Blues this month

and various other festivals. We are playing gig called 'Worldfest' on May 16, which is a solar-powered festival for the environment and animal rights. It is held in Los Angeles and is very cool."

Probably the most significant date Liquid Blue has coming up is a performance for an official world governing body (not too many bands can say that)! "We have a new single we are releasing called 'Earth Passport' which will also be the name of our upcoming album. The single is starting to be played in clubs and we have done some dance remixes of it with some really well known DJs that have had various hits. It was done by the same producer who worked with The Killers, Mark Needham and that is exciting. The biggest thing is that the United Nations has asked us to perform the song on October 7 for the General Assembly. That is one of our bigger bills of news. (laughs)"

Liquid Blue is a great band and one that buyers can feel great about bringing in to contribute to the overall social good. They will continue to stay active in public and private markets, so think about booking them for your next event today!

**BOOK IT!** For more information about Liquid Blue or their "Green" tactics, contact Scott Stephens at (760) 942-4545.

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