

# Greening the MACC



BY TOM STEVENS

What does “green” mean?

Well, the MACC has a green. It’s the palm-fringed, gently sloping, fairway-smooth lawn of the A&B Amphitheater. It has always been the center’s greenest showplace.

But it hasn’t always been the “greenest.”

“It used to be heart-breaking to go out there the morning after a concert and see 5,000 plastic cups lying on the grass,” laments one long-time MACC staffer.

But that was pre-2005. Since then, the MACC and its patrons have evolved. By changing product lines and encouraging audiences to recycle, the MACC has joined what *Inside Arts* magazine calls “a quiet green storm” sweeping entertainment venues nationwide.

“We are now proud to say we use about 90 percent recyclable products,” says MACC food and beverage co-manager Lisa Ha’ole. “Our plates, utensils, napkins, cups, straws, to-go containers, grocery bags and on occasion 30-gallon trash liners are all made from corn starch, sugar, potatoes and other plant-derived materials.”

So, those 5,000 plastic cups on the grass? They’re not plastic any more. That means they can be recycled, sparing the MACC’s grounds crew and Maui’s landfill. Add the other recyclables Ha’ole mentions,

and you can feel the quiet green storm’s first hopeful showers.

Inspired by progressive touring acts like Jack Johnson, Willie Nelson and Bonnie Raitt, the Center in January, 2006 started seeking other ways to reduce its “carbon footprint.” A first step, Ha’ole recalls, was to expand the glass recycling program to include aluminum cans, plastic bottles and cardboard.

By hosting Johnson’s “Kokua Fest” fundraisers, the MACC also got a look into the future. “That really opened up our eyes on what’s out there and what’s available,” she says. “Nothing is impossible if you put your mind to it.”

Possibilities for concert venues include staging “zero waste, carbon neutral” events like those pioneered by Virginia’s Wolf Trap performing arts center. Hybrid maintenance vehicles can replace gas-powered vehicles. High efficiency lighting can replace standard fixtures. Fans can carpool to concerts or ride energy-efficient shuttles.

While some “greening” originates with the venues, much has been driven by the

artists themselves. For instance, Bonnie Raitt and Guster no longer allow bottled water sales at their shows. Johnson, Raitt and Willie Nelson use biodeisel touring buses. Cloud Cult front man Craig Minowa founded Earth-

look out at a venue, and it’s cluttered with cups and bottles.”

Which brings us back to us. What can we concert and event-goers do to help green up the MACC?

“If patrons would look at

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ology Records in a bid to replace toxic polyvinyl chloride CD “jewel cases” with earth-friendlier cardboard packaging.

Reverb, a Vermont-based nonprofit that promotes carbon-neutral concerts and venues, points out that commuting fans generate 80 percent of an event’s carbon footprint. In response, bands like Barenaked Ladies have pioneered emission-offset programs.

Still, the artists and venues can only do so much. The rest is up to the concertgoing public. As Cloud Cult’s Minowa told *Inside Arts*: “You do all these things to mitigate your ecological footprint; then you

where they are placing their rubbish and recyclables instead of just dumping into the nearest bin,” Ha’ole advises, “that would be a great help to those of us trying to recycle. Many times people just dump everything -- plates, napkins, forks and glass bottles -- into a bin clearly marked ‘Plastic Bottles Only.’

“Look around,” she continues. “Be aware of your choices when it comes to throwing away rubbish. And why not recycle your bio cup if you know you’ll be having another beverage? Use the same cup -- your bartender or server will love you for it!”

And you’ll feel better too. ■



Lisa Ha’ole and Luana Argel, Food & Beverage Co-Managers