

Penguins on Thin Ice

*A musical revue about global climate change
for young people and the young at heart*

The Players: *The Penguins*:

Breaker (the breakdancing penguin)
Coolwings (CW)
Diver
Krill Seeker (Krill)
Reggie
Mama Earth (Mama)

Order of Songs:

1. Penguins on Thin Ice
2. Beat the Heat
3. GHGs
4. Getcha Attention
5. The Balance
6. Goodbye, Oil!
7. Energy Crisis
8. Waters of the World
9. Titanic Island
10. 22 Tons
11. Solutions Rap (not on the CD)
12. Our Now Is Here

Premise: The ice shelf where the penguins live in Antarctica is melting. The Penguins form a musical group to tell the world about losing their home due to global climate change.

Since this is a musical review, it focuses on the songs to communicate its messages, including bits of narrative between the songs which tie them together. These short connective bits of narration provide interesting facts and statements about global climate change.

[All six Penguins enter, doing a strange waltz-type dance, 3 from stage left (LS), 3 from stage right (RS). All end up at center stage (CS).]

OPENING SONG : Penguins on Thin Ice *[As the music starts, the Penguins come out on stage doing a bizarre waltz.]*

Penguins on Thin Ice, we're a little confused,
The climate is changing, and we're not amused.
Penguins dance on a thinning ice sheet,
Our homeland is melting and there's far less to eat.

We love the krill, fish, ice and the snow.
But they're disappearing – where are we to go?
You love our tuxes, our waddle and our sound.
Will you still love us when we're not around?

Penguins on ice, floating on a piece of glacier,
Out in open water, wond'ring what's going on.
We ask of you and of dear Mother Nature,
What will we do when the ice is all gone?
What will *you* do when the ice is all gone?

Breaker: September 2003: The Ward Hunt Ice Shelf, largest in the Arctic (having lost half its thickness in just 23 years) suddenly ruptures.

Coolwings: In the spring of 2002, a piece of Antarctica's Larsen B Ice Shelf the size of Rhode Island collapses in just 31 days.

Diver: Why is this happening?

Krill: Global Warming --

ALL: or Global Climate Change!

Reggie: In some places, things are melting – a LOT. That's causing all kinds of strange weather – and problems all over the world.

Mama Earth: Some climate changes are natural. But those changes are being intensified by

ALL: HUMAN ACTIVITY!

Breaker: So, the question for us is: Are we willing to ...

ALL: BEAT - the - HEAT?!

SONG #2: Beat the Heat

Beat the heat, beat the heat,
Will you win or meet defeat?
Beat the heat, beat the heat!

Heavy as rain or light as a feathah,
This game's all about the weathah,
Beat the heat, Beat the heat!

Let's not talk 'bout global warmin',
Let's not talk 'bout climate change,
Time to begin, bettah late than nevah -
Let's just talk - about the weathah!
Beat the heat,
Beat the heat, Beat the heat, BEAT THE HEAT!

CW: There's methane, nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide – that's CO₂, the king of greenhouse gases.

Diver: They're natural to some degree, but there's a LOT MORE now due to

ALL: HUMAN ACTIVITY!

Krill: From burning wood, coal, oil and gas for energy.

Reggie: These fossil fuels have RULED, turning our industrial gears --

Mama: Now there's more CO₂ in the atmosphere than in 650,000 years!

Breaker: So, unless we change our habits here, more industry, agriculture and people on the planet will put more GHGs into the atmosphere.

SONG #3: GHGs

Greenhouse Gases – GHGs,
Floating around in the breeze,
Trap the heat from the Earth and sun -
Global warming has begun.

GHGs, GHGs,
Floating around in the breeze.
We breathe out CO₂, give it to the trees,
But when we make too much,
We create dis-ease.

GHGs, GHGs,
Floating around in the breeze.
GHGs, GHGs, GHGs!

CW: In 2003, the UN reported that climate impact cost the world \$60 billion. In 2004, climate impacts cost \$145 billion.

Diver: Klaus Toepfer, former director of the UN Environment Program, UNEP, said,

Krill: “The scientific consensus on human-induced climate change should sound alarm bells in every national capitol and in every local community.”

Reggie: In August 2003, summer heat waves in Europe left 35,000 people dead.

Breaker: Maybe Mother Earth is trying to get our attention?

[All exit except for Mama Earth, who crosses to down stage center (DCS).]

SONG #4: Getcha Attention (Sung by **Mama Earth**)

Whaddoo I gotta do to getcha attention?
Whaddoo I gotta do to be heard?
Whaddoo I gotta do to make you listen?
I take action, I’m not much on words!

Screaming wind, pounding rain,
Snow way down south – don’t you think it’s insane?
Floods one minute, droughts the next,
Aren’t you just a little perplexed? Oh --

Whaddoo I gotta do to getcha attention?
Whaddoo I gotta do to be heard?
Whaddoo I gotta do to make you listen?
I take action, I’m not much on words!
I’m not much on words!

I’m the *kinesthetic* type – I like to *show* you how I feel!

[Mama Earth exits, as Coolwings and Diver enter and cross to DCS.]

CW: There's always been CO2 in the atmosphere, but there's WAAAAYYY too much of it now, because we've been burning so much carbon-based fossil fuel for the last 150 years.

Diver: So now, the Earth and its atmosphere are out of balance.

SONG #5: The Balance

Coolwings:

How do we find the balance?
How do we find the key?
Where would you look to find it?
I want you to tell me.

Diver:

How do we find the balance?
How do we level the scales?
Think about the animals – from the frogs to the whales.
And then tell me what you think,

CW & Diver together:

[with harmony or in unison] Take time and think hard.
[unison] Think about what life is like beyond your own backyard.

CW.:

How do we find the balance?
How do we find the key?

Diver:

How would you like to write
The next page of history?

Both sing in unison:

How would you write
The next page of history?
How do we find the balance?
How do we find the key?

[At end of song, CW & Diver stay at DCS. The others come out and join them.]

CW: In the U.S., big oil, coal and nuclear companies have big influence over our energy policy. And they get most of the energy subsidies – that's our tax dollars!

Diver: It's time for real sustainable energy!

Krill: And energy efficiency!

[For "Goodbye, Oil!", the solos are suggested but can be changed or doubled, etc., depending on the preference of the directors. Each soloist should come forward at DCS for each of his/her solo parts.]

SONG #6: Goodbye Oil!

Krill:

Government and oil were the best of friends,
All through their old school days.
Both members of the old boys club,
Refining the American way.

Breaker:

After the elections, the vows were taken,
And all of those who paid and toiled
Had to be paid back for their hard work,
And the debt was to be paid in oil -- [ALL: "Oil?! Not oil! Don't say OIL!!"]

CW:

With combustion engines, and housing heat,
And lights in every building and street,
Planes to fly, cars and trucks to drive,
And faster paces than you could meet.

Diver:

Well, a hundred years of burning oil
Wreaked havoc with the air, land and sea,
The droughts and floods, and changing climates
Made it so we finally had to see
That OIL HAD TO GO!

Krill, Reggie, Mama:

Ta--- ta, ta, ta, ta—

Breaker, CW, Diver:

Goodbye, oil!

Breaker:

Those SUVs?
They never looked good to me, oil.

CW:

You feelin' hot?
It's happenin' like it or not, oil.

Diver:

You're in the dark?
Turn on the light in your heart, oil.

Krill:

The enviro's came in and brought a warning
But people didn't want to hear.
They kept on buying those SUVs,
The truth gave 'em too much fear.

Mama:

Some said coal could save our soul,
But it was just more CO2.
And we couldn't deny that people were dying

From the mining and its poisons, too.
COAL AND OIL HAD TO GO!

Krill, Reggie, Mama:

Ta--- ta, ta, ta, ta—

Breaker, CW, Diver:

Goodbye, oil!

Krill, Reggie, Mama:

Ta--- ta, ta, ta, ta—

Breaker, CW, Diver:

Goodbye, oil!

Reggie:

So, we bought solar panels, yeah, photovoltaics,
Put 'em in our windows and roofs,
We buy hybrid electric cars,
Windmills and biomass,
And do the conservation groove!
'Cause OIL HAD TO GO!

Krill, Reggie, Mama:

Ta--- ta, ta, ta, ta—

Breaker, CW, Diver:

Goodbye, oil!

Breaker:

Time to AWAKE! –
Do you know what's at stake, oil?

CW:

What a surprise –
Watch the sea level rise, oil.

Diver:

Leave you in the ground,
There's cleaner power to be found, oil.

Mama:

Your price is too high!
We'll get our fuel from the sky, oil.

ALL: GOODBYE, OIL!

Krill:

Discovery News, May 2005: A Stanford University study shows that 20 percent of the world's wind energy could power the world!

ALL: WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?

Reggie: Where do we put our energy?

CW: In the U.S. Corn Belt, we get barely more energy from the crop than the energy we put in. Greenhouse gas emissions are part of the price we pay for energy-intensive, energy-expensive agriculture.

Diver: As for our *personal* energy, let's ask ourselves: How can we use our time and energy to create a healthy world for our kids?

SONG #7: Energy Crisis

Breaker:

There are lots of schools in the U.S.A.
But no one's asking what WE have to say.
We're not old enough to vote, and even if we could,
Who's to say our government would do what WE think it should?!

ALL: *[Breaker can break dance]*

"Energy Crisis" is what they say.
Who's pullin' the strings?
Who's gonna pay? Who's gonna pay?

[All break out dancing]

Breaker: There's plenty of energy, inside you and me,

Mama: In sun and wind, and sometimes in the sea.

Breaker: There's tons of energy yet to be used,

Mama: Hydrogen and some biomass fuels.

Breaker:

So don't talk to me about "no energy",
'Cause there's plenty all around – all you've got to do is see.
Yeah, there's plenty all around –and it starts in you and me!

ALL: *[Breaker can break dance]*

"Energy Crisis" is what they say.
Who's pullin' the strings?
Who's gonna pay? Who's gonna pay?

[All break out dancing, and fall to the ground, in a squat position facing audience, on the last drum fill/beat.]

Krill: Droughts are causing food shortages in one-sixth of the nations of the world --

Reggie: From Africa to Australia.

Mama: From Cuba to Cambodia.

Breaker: From Honduras to Afghanistan to Spain!

CW: And we're cutting down the Rainforests!!

ALL: Is that INSANE?!

Diver: And what happens HERE affects the climate THERE!

Krill: Glaciers are melting, from Kenya to Washington.

Reggie: Greenland glacier's losing three miles a year.

Mama: When glaciers melt, sea levels rise. Islands and coasts, say goodbye! You'll be drinking salt soda with your burgers and fries!

Breaker: Ocean currents like the Gulf Stream are likely to stop. Is that good news for Europe? North America?

ALL: It's NOT!

CW: When your temperature goes up one degree, how do you feel?

Diver: Kind of sick.

CW: Well, for fish and reefs, it's the same deal.

Diver: We love to see whales and reefs of great beauty. They help us, we hurt them.

ALL: We're not doing our duty!

Krill: 60 percent of our body is water, and 80 percent of our blood. Every system inside us depends on this fluid, but our ignorance flows like a flood.

Reggie: Many folks in the world don't have water at all. That's a crime and it's not getting better, y'all.

Mama: It's time for everyone to see –

ALL: EVERYTHING is connected –people, air, food, every stream, every sea!

[Krill stays at DCS, all others move upstage a bit, still centered (UCS) and make a slow 'wave' with their bodies (as people do in stadiums) when the music begins.]

SONG #8: Waters of the World

Krill Seeker:

All the waters of the world are connected,
Though on the surface it's not easy to see
They change the climate all over the world,
Just like we do, degree by degree.

Oh, the waters of the world are connected,
They flow through hearts as they flow through the land,
We're drawn to water, our lifelong friend,
Its power and mystery

We're still learning to understand.

ALL: *[Stop doing the wave motion here]*

Oh, the waters of the world,
Far more precious than oil.

Krill:

They carry what we give to them,
From near to foreign soil.

ALL:

Oh, the waters of the world,
Salty swells fill ev'ry sea,

Krill:

And a tiny sip of fresh water
Must quench all humanity.

[During musical interlude, all do a slow wave or swimming motion around the stage. Krill returns to DCS in time to sing. All return to DCS, forming a semi-circle around Krill, in time to sing the last line together.]

Krill:

All the waters of the world are connected,
And we're just now beginning to see
Our currents rise below their tides,
And how they'll flow is up to you and me.

ALL: Yes, how they'll flow is up - to - you -- and me.

[After they finish singing, on the ending music, Krill spins around slowly in place, while the others make a slow wave over him/her; then they all spin around slowly. On the water droplet sounds at the very end, each one drops to the ground on one of the droplet sounds, keeping faces up and out toward audience. On the last droplet sound, all faces drop toward the ground. During applause, all stand up and remain at DCS.]

CW: "The most populous and wealthiest of the world face a moral challenge greater than colonialism or slavery. They are failing in that challenge. Men have lost reason in the fossil fuel economy.... Inhabitants of small islands have not agreed to be sacrificial lambs on the altar of the wealth of the rich."

-- Ambassador Lionel Hurst, of Antigua-Barbuda, March 2003

[On intro. music to Titanic Island, all move upstage a bit, but remaining at CS. Then Reggie comes DCS again to begin singing.]

SONG #9: Titanic Island

Reggie:

Welcome to – Titanic Island,
You are al--ways welcome here.
We offer you this last bit of high land,
Before we completely disappear.

ALL:

Titanic Island, where sun shines all day.

Titanic Island, where fish used to play.
Where the sea level's rising, and the reefs used to be,
Before our island -- took their place in the sea.

Reggie:

We're a small island and a small country,
In a big world getting smaller all the time.
You can't see the horizon if you're small in your mind -
You only can see it if your vision is wide.

ALL: Titanic island,

Reggie:

Where the water is warm,
One small degree warmer, and it changed our form.
The melting glaciers from far, they say,
Are making our island wash completely away.

ALL: Titanic Island,

Reggie:

Once a great Paradise,
Will disappear while the world rolls the dice.
We offer you comfort 'neath the palms and the moon,
We hope you'll come back, but you'd better make it soon.

ALL:

Titanic Island, where sun shines all day.
Titanic Island, where fish used to play.
Where the sea level's rising, and the reefs used to be,
Before our island -- took their place in the sea.
Titanic Island, Titanic Island!

[Diver and Krill join Reggie at DCS.]

Diver: In the U.S., we're one-twentieth of the world's population, but we use a quarter of the world's resources just for our nation.

Krill: Globally, the average person puts *four tons* of CO2 in the air every year. In the U.S., it's **TWENTY-TWO tons** per person –

ALL: What is going on here?

[CW, Diver & Reggie are in the front row; Breaker, Krill & Mama are in the back row, staggered between the others so that all can be seen.]

SONG #10: 22 Tons

CW, Diver & Reggie:

I got up this morning, it was smoggy outside.
Took a long, hot shower, put the car into drive.
Started out on my long commute,
To make MORE, MORE, MORE was my pursuit.

22 tons of CO2
Every year, that's what I spew.
Into the air, just little old me.
22 tons of carbon dioxide,
That's a lot, you'd agree.

[Back row becomes front row]

Breaker, Krill & Mama:

I went to my office, with its thousands of lights,
All burning brightly all through the night.
I fired up my computer and my fax machine,
My phones, my copier and a few other things.

22 tons, what do you get?
Hot, bothered and deeper in debt.
When around the world 4 tons is the norm,
My 22 tons intensifies the storm.

[Back row becomes front row]

CW, Diver & Reggie:

I got floods in the subways, can't work today,
Droughts in winter, and my crops went away.
The forest fires eatin' up my trees -
That's *more* C-O-2 blowin' round in the breeze!

[Back row joins front row]

ALL:

22 tons, what do you get?
Weather I'm gonna regret.

[Breaker, CW, Diver, Krill, & Reggie drop to their knees, Mama towers over them. She does a big gesture toward them when they sing "Twenty-Two Tons".]

ALL (except Mama):

Mama Earth, don't you call me,
'Cause I don't wanna know.
Here come my Twenty-Two Tons! --

ALL:

LOOK OUT BELOW!

[On "below", lights flash, then blackout. All stand at DCS.]

Breaker:

We need to change our habits – we know how.

CW:

There are SO MANY SOLUTIONS, if we start NOW!

Diver:

We're smart and innovative, extremely creative! We can decide how our future will be.

ALL:

WE, THE FUTURE, want GREEN JOBS - for our people and economy!

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SONG #11: Solutions Rap

ALL:

So many Solutions! So much we can do!
Time to beat the heat!
It's up to me and you!

Krill: Mix humanity with ingenuity - Change pollutions into solutions!

Reggie: Walk or bike - drive less - Exercise and help the mess.

Mama: A hybrid car beats an SUV - Saves the Earth *and* your money!

Breaker: Ask for public transportation across the nation – that would be a REAL sensation!

CW: Buy food that's locally grown, and take your vacations close to home.

Diver: Put insulation in your walls and help your heating bills fall.

Krill: Help keep the Earth in tune -- Shut the lights and computer when you leave the room.

Reggie: Energy efficient bulbs and machines help to change the climate scene.

Mama: Heat and a/c use lots of power - GREEN power saves money by the kilowatt hour!

Breaker: Garbage puts CO2 gas in the air, so reduce, reuse, recycle, repair!

CW: Learn where to shop and what *not* to buy,
Your money talks, you can't deny!

Diver: Saving trees helps cool the breeze.

Krill: It's all about how we choose the energy we use.

Reggie: Don't sit and worry about climate change,
Let's take charge and re-arrange,

Mama: Tell your family, friends, and teachers -
We can protect ALL Earth's creatures.

ALL:

So many Solutions! So much we can do!
Little things add up to meet
The challenge to beat the heat!

Breaker:

We need to cut our GHGs.

And switch to **sustainable** energies!
So there's plenty for our kids when they're grown,
And we can be proud of the place we call home!

CW:

The citizens of the world are at our door --
No reason to wait a minute more.

Diver:

In the U.S., citizens, colleges, cities, and states are working to meet or beat the goals of the Kyoto climate change treaty.

Krill: That's great, but it is not enough. So we're telling our leaders:

ALL:

LISTEN TO YOUR CHILDREN!
We know what's in fashion --
A world of caring, love & compassion!

[Do the above 4 lines four times, leading the audience; can clap in rhythm. Then stop clapping, and all sing the last four lines below. If the audience is going wild at this point, you can end the show right here.]

ALL:

We have no fear.
The air is clear.
We will breathe freely.
Our now is here!

ALL: Thank you all for coming!

The End

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[Ideally, at the end as the kids sing "Our now is here!": Projected on a large screen would be the following quotes and information]:

"To me the question of the environment is more ominous than that of peace and war...I'm more worried about global warming than I am of any major military conflict."
-- U.N. Weapons Inspector Hans Blix, (March 2003)

"Our house is burning down and we're blind to it...The earth and humankind are in danger and we are all responsible. It is time to open our eyes. Alarms are sounding across all the continents . . . We cannot say that we did not know! Climate warming is still reversible. Heavy would be the responsibility of those who refused to fight it." -- French President Jacques Chirac at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (August 2002)

"We've known for some time that we have to worry about the impacts of climate change on our children's and grandchildren's generations. But we now have to worry about ourselves as well."
-- Margaret Beckett, British Secretary of State for the Environment (April 2002)

Press Release: June 13, 2005: Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels' Climate Protection Agreement received unanimous support from U.S. Conference of Mayors. Before the conference, 164 cities had signed the Agreement, challenging U.S. cities to meet or beat the goals of the Kyoto Protocol. As of January 2006, 192 U.S. cities had signed the Agreement.

The Washington Post, June 17, 2005: U.S. Weakens G8 Climate Plan
"Under U.S. pressure, negotiators in the past month have agreed to delete language that would detail how rising temperatures are affecting the globe, set ambitious targets to cut carbon dioxide emissions, and set stricter environmental standards for World Bank-funded power projects."

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All songs by Sharon Abreu & Michael Hurwicz except:

22 Tons (Words by Sharon Abreu & Michael Hurwicz, Music by Merle Travis)

Special thanks to Ross Gelbspan (www.heatisonline.org), Peter Bunyard, Richard Levicki, and Doug Koplou (<http://www.earthtrack.net/earthtrack/index.asp>), and to The Celebration Foundation, The Raynier Foundation, and the generous individuals who have helped bring this project to life.

Recommended Resources:

- Books:** Boiling Point (Ross Gelbspan / www.heatisonline.org)
Big Coal (Jeff Goodell)
Stormy Weather: 101 Solutions to Global Climate Change (Dauncey & Mazza)
- Films:** An Inconvenient Truth (www.climatecrisis.net)
Kilowatt Ours (www.kilowattours.org)
- Report:** No Reason to Wait:
<http://www.hewlett.org/NR/rdonlyres/EC89F796-649C-4196-9DFA-8100F0166420/0/NoReasonToWait.pdf>
- Stanford University Study: Wind Could Meet Global Energy Needs:

<http://www.heatisonline.org/contentserver/objecthandlers/index.cfm?id=5320&method=full>