

Capitol Steps to spoof politics/politicians at October 27 performance in UCSD's Mandeville Auditorium

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"Typically the Republicans goof up, and the Democrats party. Then the Democrats goof up, and the Republicans party. That's what we call a two-party system."

And that's a typical gibe of the Capitol Steps, who bill themselves as the only group in Washington that attempts to be funnier than Congress.

The Capitol Steps will perform at 8 p.m. Oct. 27 in Mandeville Auditorium at the University of California, San Diego.

The Capitol Steps is a high-energy musical comedy troupe that presents up-to-the-minute parodies of contemporary political shenanigans. It consists of former, or "recovering", Congressional staffers who prey upon the foibles of our national leaders -- Democrats and Republicans alike. Traveling the country satirizing the hands that once fed them, the ensemble does more than 300 performances a year along with regular presentations on National Public Radio.

The Oct. 27 performance in UCSD's Mandeville Auditorium is sponsored by the UCSD University Events Office and will include five former Congressional staffers (and one pianist) taking on a myriad of roles, spitting out one-liners and colluding in songs, such as one characterizing Congress as "super, callous, mean and nasty right-wing legislation" (sung to the tune with the long name from Mary Poppins).

The Capitol Steps have recorded 16 albums in the past 14 years, including four during the Clinton administration: Return to Center, A Whole Newt World, Lord of the Fries, and The Joy of Sax. Past releases have included 76 Bad Loans, We Arm the World and Fools on the Hill.

"We used to be afraid there'd be some competent congress or administration that would solve all the problems and we'd be out of jokes," says Capitol Steps co-founder and performer Elaina Newport. "But we've stopped worrying about that."

The group was formed in 1981 when three Senate staffers were asked to provide entertainment for the Foreign Relations Committee Christmas Party. "We had considered doing the traditional Nativity play, but we couldn't find three wise men and a virgin," Newport quips. Instead, they dug into the headlines and hot topics of the day and came up with satirical political lyrics to familiar popular tunes.

Voila! The Capitol Steps. Co-founders were Newport, Bill Strauss and Jim Aidala who reasoned that "if entertainers could become politicians, politicians could become entertainers." Each member of the current full cast of 20 performers, six per each show, has worked on Capitol Hill, some for Republicans, some for Democrats, and some "for politicians who sit firmly on the fence."

The Capitol Steps have performed for Presidents Ford, Reagen, Bush, and Clinton; and celebrities and politicians such as former President Bush, Sam Donaldson, Fawn Hall, Larry King and Vice President Al Gore have performed with the Capitol Steps. The only complaints the Capitol Steps get, they say, are "from politicians and personalities who are not included in the program."

Tickets for the Oct. 27 performance are \$25 general admission; \$20 for UCSD faculty, staff and senior citizens, and \$15 for students. Tickets are available at the UCSD Box Office, 534-6467, and at Ticketmaster outlets. For further information, call the UCSD University Events Office at 534-4090.

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