

Musical political satire highlights annual "Evening with..." benefit on October 30

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Media Contact: Pat JaCoby, 534-7404

MUSICAL POLITICAL SATIRE HIGHLIGHTS ANNUAL "EVENING WITH..." BENEFIT

The "Capitol Steps," a Washington, D.C. group of current or former Congressional staffers known nationally for its musical political satire, took on Bush, Clinton, Perot and Congress at the Hotel del Coronado tonight (Oct. 30) and came out the winner.

Sponsored by the UCSD Medical Center Auxiliary, the humorous program was the 13th edition of the group's annual "An Evening with..." series. The event took a timely pre-election turn from such previous speakers as Sir Edmund Hillery, Jacques Cousteau and Tom Wolfe.

Proceeds from the black-tie event will benefit the Bannister Family House, a Medical Center facility to house patients and family members who have temporarily located in San Diego for treatment in such specialized areas as organ transplantation and cancer therapy. Construction is scheduled to begin this fall.

Chloe Moore and Judith Pettitt, co-chairs, said the evening is expected to raise more than \$100,000 for Bannister House equipment.

(As of Wednesday, Oct. 28, there were 480 reservations at 48 tables for 10. With 400 persons expected to attend, the event was a sell-out three weeks in advance.)

Known as the funniest group in Washington--next to Congress-- the Capitol Steps troupe performs song parodies poking fun at current events. Since their start at a Congressional office party in 1981, the Steps have done over 1,500 shows, produced nine albums and sung 400 different song parodies. They have performed for three Presidents and have appeared on shows ranging from "Good Morning America" to "Nightline." For the past four years, Capitol Steps songs have been featured on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered."

The Steps' set consists mostly of popular songs with satirical lyrics--like the one to the tune of "Oklahoma" that describes the Japanese influence on the U.S. economy, called "Yokohama." All the routines are enhanced with sight gags such as funny signs, props and costume bits, but there's little choreography and the heart of the show is the songs.

Though the members are all past or present Capitol Hill staffers, they make certain the jokes are easy to fathom for the politically uninitiated. "Immense Expense Lies Mainly in Defense" is a popular audience sung-along to the tune of "The Rain in Spain," and budget deficit reduction tactics are explained by the owners of a clothing discount store.

And what are the Capitol Steps' political leanings? Democratic audiences tend to see the cast as Democrats, Republicans as Republicans, and the group doesn't yet know what the Perotians think.

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