

'Capitol Steps' Performing Group Kicks Off Ford Center's New Season Aug. 29

Contributed by Deborah Purnell
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OXFORD, Miss. - Capitol Steps, touted as the musical troupe that put the "mock" in democracy, comes to the Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Mississippi Aug. 29, as a lighthearted prelude to the UM-hosted first 2008 presidential debate.

Tickets for the 8 p.m. show are \$30 and available by visiting the UM Box Office in the Student Union, Ford Center Box Office or "events" at <http://www.olemiss.edu/fordcenter/> . Tickets are also available by calling 662-915-7411.

"There is no production more fitting than the Steps as we look forward to the debate in the Ford Center (Sept. 26)," said Ford Center Director Norm Easterbrook. "This could be the last laugh - or maybe the first. I'm not sure. I do know that these folks are famous for great comedy that crosses all party lines. Our audience is sure to have a great time."

The Capitol Steps began in December 1981 as a group of U.S. Senate staffers who set out to satirize the very people and places that employed them. Since then, the group has recorded nearly 30 albums. They've been featured on NBC, CBS, ABC and PBS, and can be heard four times a year on National Public Radio stations nationwide during their "Politics Takes A Holiday" radio specials.

In a recent interview for KSMU-FM, co-founder Elaina Newport said, "We have about 30 performers, but each show has five people in it and a pianist.

"Throughout the show, you'll see maybe 30, 32 songs and skits and only five performers. There's a tremendous backstage flurry. (For example), the guy who's playing Vladimir Putin has to play Dick Cheney and Larry Craig."

Newport added that the material is updated constantly. The group's latest album, "Campaign and Suffering," includes satires on senators Barack Obama and John McCain, plus C-SPAN, President George Bush, Hillary and Bill Clinton, and even Paris Hilton.

Visit the Ford Center Web site.