



# The Capitol Steps

## Political Satire Troupe

Twenty-five years ago, the Capitol Steps began as a group of Senate staffers who set out to satirize the very people and places that employed them. In the years that followed, many of the Steps ignored the conventional wisdom ("*Don't quit your day job!*"), and although not all of the current members of the Steps are former Capitol Hill staffers, taken together the performers have worked in a total of eighteen Congressional offices and represent 62 years of collective House and Senate staff experience.

Since they began, the Capitol Steps have recorded 26 albums, including their latest, *I'm So Indicted*. They've been featured on NBC, CBS, ABC, and PBS, and can be heard 4 times a year on National Public Radio stations nationwide during their *Politics Takes a Holiday* radio specials.

The Capitol Steps were born in December, 1981 when some staffers for Senator Charles Percy were planning entertainment for a Christmas party. Ronald Reagan was President when the Steps began, so co-founders Elaina Newport, Bill Strauss and Jim Aidala figured that if entertainers could become politicians, then politicians could become entertainers! Their first idea was to stage a nativity play, but in the whole Congress they couldn't find three wise men or a virgin! So, they decided to dig into the headlines of the day, and created song parodies & skits which conveyed a special brand of satirical humor that was as popular in Peoria as it was on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Most cast members have worked on Capitol Hill; some for Democrats, some for Republicans, and others for politicians who firmly straddle the fence. No matter who holds office, there's never a shortage of material. Says Elaina Newport, "Typically the Republicans goof up, and the Democrats party. Then the Democrats goof up and the Republicans party. That's what we call the two-party system."

Although the Capitol Steps are based in Washington, DC, most of their shows are out-of-town or for out-of-town audiences, whether it's the National Welding Supply Association, a university audience, high schoolers, or state legislators. In fact, the Capitol Steps have performed for the last five Presidents (six, if you include Hillary). The only complaints the Steps seem to get are from politicians and personalities who are not included in the program!

The material is updated constantly, whether to include George Bush's latest malapropism, in "Don't Go Fakin' You're Smart" (to Elton John's "Don't Go Breaking My Heart") or John Kerry's positions on the issues ("I've Taken Stands on Both Sides Now") or on the international side, Ariel Sharon and Mahmoud Abbas reconciling their differences in the touching "Embraceable Jew." No matter who's in the headlines, the Capitol Steps are equal opportunity offenders.