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Capitol Steps @ Cranwell Resort, 7/24/10

July 25, 2010 at 9:26 am by Michael Janairo, Arts & Entertainment Editor

Watch out: The Capitol Steps are back.

On Saturday night at the Cranwell Resort in Lenox, Mass., the comedy troupe had people chortling, giggling, snickering, shrieking and doubling over, nearly falling out of their seats, because they were laughing so hard.

In a swift 90 minutes, six-members of the well-known troupe (they're often heard on NPR) performed 28 skits and song parodies, taking aim at politicians, celebrities and the problems of today.

One of the night's biggest laughs came from a reworking of the Andrew Lloyd Weber hit "Don't Cry for me Argentina." Cast member Mike Tilford in the role of disgraced South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford sang, "Don't Cry, I'm in Argentina," in which he sings about the "holy union between a man and a wife and a woman on the side."

Cast member Ann Johnson's torch song to pharmaceuticals also elicited huge laughs, especially in talking about giving a son Ritalin: "We thought he had ADD, it turned out he was just an S.O.B."

So did cast member's Nancy Dolliver's take on Sarah Palin, in which the former Alaska governor reacts to the news of daughter Bristol's re-engagement to Levi Johnson. To the tune of "Get Me to the Church On Time," she sings, "They're getting married without warning." And later, she suggests a more suitable mate for her daughter, "She should put her dibs on Mel Gibson/ At least he goes to work sometimes."

Cast member Michael Carruthers, in one of the evenings few non-musical sketches, took the stage in a head scarf and fake moustache and said, "Salami baloney," before introducing himself as a Taliban suicide-bomber school instructor, who announced that due to recent losses in the U.S. stock market, the Taliban had to enact budget cuts. One of them meant that in the afterlife bombers wouldn't be greeted by 72 virgins, but by 13 divorcees.

The true revelation of the night was Jon Bell, one of the newest Step members, whose high-level of energy and powerful voice enlivened an already lively stage. He got to play such characters as President Obama, Tiger Woods, a shark-attack victim, a pirate, a Japanese auto executive, a Tea Party activist, a suicide bomber and a character who appears to be an illegal immigrant. To the Eagle's tune "Hotel California," he sang "Welcome to the State of Arizona," a duet with a Tilford as an Arizona police officer who threatens to arrest Bell, until he reveals himself to be a Navajo, who sings, "We fight illegals, too, since 1492."

Throughout the evening, pianist Dave Kerr kept the swift momentum going with an upbeat tempo. At one point, he even helped one Stepper remember his lines.

With the economy dragging, unemployment high, the oil spreading in the Gulf of Mexico and politics, well, being politics, the Capitol Steps bring some necessary relief. They perform nightly, except Tuesdays, at the Cranwell through Sept. 5.

Comedy review
The Capitol Steps
When: 8 p.m. Saturday
Where: Cranwell Resort, 55 Lee Road, Lenox, Mass.
Length: 90 minutes
Continues: 8 p.m. Wednesday-Monday, through Sept. 5
Tickets: $49

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