



'Steps' right up

GENUINE political satire, especially of the non-partisan variety, is such a rare commodity these days — reason enough to welcome back the annual visit by the Capitol Steps.

This time, the Washington, D.C.-based comedy troupe has returned with an up-to-the minute musical revue, cheekily titled "Four More Years in the Bush Leagues."

Performed cabaret style at the Supper Club, it takes gleeful swipes at both those in power and those who aspire to it.

Needless to say, our current president takes more than his share of abuse; as his onstage counterpart puts it, he likes to indulge in "self-defecating humor."

Rumsfeld makes an appearance as well — saying of his boss, "the little wheel is turning but the hamster's dead" — and the two comment on the war and other military options in the playful ditty "Help Rwanda," sung to the tune "Help Me, Rhonda."

There's even an appearance by the Iraqi "Tourist Minister," who promotes his country with the song, "On the Sunni Side of the Street."

The Democrats take their share of abuse as well. Howard Dean screams his way through "The Impossible Dean," the relationship travails of Bill and Hillary are predictably lampooned, and Kerry is skewered in a debate spoof in which candidates must answer "Why did the chicken cross the road?"



The Capitol Steps comedy troupe is back with attacks.

COMEDY REVIEW



Frank Scheck

THE CAPITOL STEPS: FOUR MORE YEARS IN THE BUSH LEAGUES

Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. (212) 279-4200. Through Sunday.

Among the other topics taken on are airport security (a nun is body-searched while Darth Vader walks blithely by); the problem of "electile dysfunction"; the aging of the Supreme Court ("Our legal briefs are now Depends"); Kim Jung Il ("How Do You Handle a Problem Like Korea?"); and the conservative co-opting of public television or, as it's referred to here, "GOPBS."

Not all of the material clicks, and the show would benefit from some pruning

of its two-hour running time. But the cast members go through their paces with expert comic timing, the writing is generally sharp and funny, and the evening turns out to be as educational as it is entertaining.