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“We shall overcome, we shall overcome, we shall overcome someday! Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe we shall overcome someday!” Along with this verse from ‘We Shall Overcome,’ a traditional African American spiritual, came many other songs heard during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century era of extreme racial turbulence and segregation in American history. On the evening of Tuesday, Sept. 24, the RU Faculty Jazz Quintet performed jazz, swing, and blues tunes that characterized a time in America when racial tension was at its peak! The Quintet is comprised of several Radford University professors with highly acclaimed credentials in music performance, education, and composition. With Dr. Wayne Gallops on keyboard and piano, Dr. Joseph Scartelli on upright Bass and acoustic guitar, Dr. Dayl Burnett on trombone, Dr. Chris White on flute and saxophone, and Mr. Al Wojtera on drums and percussion, the audience was in for an evening of laidback, cool jazz rhythms that was sure to please the audience!

Unlike the traditional concerts that are normally held in the Performance Hall in the Covington Center where people are to clap in between pieces and sit quietly until it is apparent that the performer is finished, this show particularly called for audience participation. Coaxed by the performers to snap or clap on beats 2 and 4, the audience certainly got a small sense of the atmosphere in a real jazz club setting. The concert began with ‘Black and Blue’ by Thomas “Fats” Waller which set the show off with a nice, smooth-running jazz feel and a relaxed tempo. Following this piece was ‘The Times, They are a’Changin,’ by Bob Dylan in 1964, which had the performers on acoustic guitar, flute, and bongos demonstrating a soft and gentle timbre of the instruments that was a perfect pace change to the usual quick, upbeat style. After a few more spirituals and soul tunes, the group performed ‘Strange Fruit’ by Abel Meeropol. Meeropol wrote the poem “Bitter Fruit” during the Civil Rights Movement in his own personal protest of the summertime lynchings in the United States. Eventually, he renamed the poem ‘Strange Fruit’ and put it into song format. The song was performed and made popular, as well as slightly controversial, by the American jazz singer and songwriter, Billie Holiday. The audience got the sense of frustration and sadness from the composer from lines such as, ‘Pastoral scene of the gallant south, the bulging eyes and the twisted mouth, scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh, then the sudden smell of burning flesh.’

The Quintet received a standing o, upon which they came back out to encore with ‘When the

Saints Go Marching In,' a riveting and fun piece that had the jazz members out into the audience playing their horns right next to the people! This was very fun and exciting for the audience proving that jazz music is, indeed, interactive and should always be, even in a formal setting!