

## Persiani in his own right

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Special to The Daily Star

Stephane Persiani was stage manager on Charles Mingus's last European tour, and there is something of the great bassist's spirit in *Complexion*, the quintet Persiani has brought to Beirut for four nights at the Blue Note.

It is, in part, the sense of fun and adventure, the flexible musical forms, and a very collective approach to playing jazz.

Persiani leads from behind his bass, which he holds with great affection, but all the quintet bring something individual in both their solos and harmonies – as Persiani and drummer Stephane Foucher hold the show together.

The tunes are mainly compositions by Persiani and guitarist Michael Felberbaum, with whom Persiani plays in the Steve Potts quartet. Once the theme is up and running, off we go.

Jean-Michel Couchet, on soprano and alto sax, played for two years in the Franco-German Jazz

Ensemble led by Albert Mangelsdorff. But he has also improvised with Steve Grossman.

Pianist Ronnie Paterson, who was born in Kansas and grew up in South Carolina, is dripping with the blues of the American south. Here is a man who feels the notes – and doesn't believe in wasting them.

Behind the cool lies technique. Paterson has recorded with drummer Aldo Romano, and is just as *au fait* playing the second Rachmaninov piano concerto as laying down funk.

"I don't like to talk much," said Persiani Wednesday. But he did suggest that the band was "sweet and lovely."

It was an "in" jazz joke – "Sweet and Lovely" is a standard. But here's the nice thing: While these musicians are grounded in some serious jazz, their music is – at the same time – very accessible. Just like Mingus.

*Complexion at the Blue Note, Friday and Saturday*



Stephane Persiani: "He holds his bass with great affection"