



## Republic Street may sleep a little earlier

Written by Bradley Cachia

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As you walk through Republic Street in Valletta, you can hear a variety of sounds: the teenage cliques wearing crop tops and caps who seem to mistake shouting for speaking; the voice of Benny serenading tourists with songs in their native tongue; the mothers barking at their children to hold their hand so that they won't get lost in the crowd; the mumbling of the elderly as they walk alone towards the Court building to rest on the benches set in front of it; the monthly chanting for justice which has been going on since they exploded one of our journalists ...

Amongst these sounds, which can be both harmonious and cacophonic, there was also the sound of a white electric guitar, which filled the long street characterised by McDonald's, Starbucks, local band clubs, the Museum of Archaeology, and so on. And behind that sound, there was a man who for many people, including myself, seemed to be rather mysterious.

I can't seem to recall a time when I saw him there in the morning or the afternoon, but I certainly remember seeing him there at night, sometimes even after ten o'clock in the evening. His presence as I walked through the Capital's main street in the dead of night (after a rehearsal or after meeting up with some friends or after a date with my girlfriend) couldn't go unnoticed. Even when there wasn't a single soul walking through Republic Street, except mine ... he remained there, playing his heart out. In the few seconds that would pass as I stroll in front of him, it would be just him and I, alone in the darkness which was lit by the lights of the closed shops. I would catch a glimpse of him and, in that moment, he seemed to be in a world of his own; in the world of Santana and Pink Floyd.

Yesterday (Saturday), [Lovin Malta](#) announced that this man passed away last month (December 2022). They wrote that his name was "Alan," but I got curious and wanted to look up some more information about him. I went on Google and YouTube to try and find something there. In the search box I wrote:

- "alan valletta"
- "guitarist valletta"
- "guitarist valletta busker"

... and with the latter entry, I found out his name was actually Elon Stone.

For the first time ever, I was interested to see who this enigmatic man was. I hadn't realised up until this point how Elon served as an integral part of many experiences I had in the Capital, especially in the evenings.

I must admit that the style he seemed to enjoy playing is not the style which I would enjoy listening to voluntarily, but I still greatly appreciate this man's dedication. He would just set up, ignore everyone around him, and play whatever he wanted to play.

At the end of the day, I think that is the spirit a true musician should have; a spirit driven by his strong wish to defy all odds and express his love for music, even when people are passing by and judging your "dirty" appearance or your choice of "noisy" and "nonsensical" songs.

I have no idea why this man chose to spend his time busking in the middle of Valletta. Perhaps life was hard on him and he couldn't keep up with it, so he tried to lend himself an extra buck from busking. Or perhaps he simply did it for fun, as a pastime. I don't know. Whatever the reason is, we can't go without appreciating that, no matter what the weather was, you would find him there, embellishing the street with music. For this, he deserves to be remembered.

Without Elon, Republic Street may start to sleep and rest a little earlier ...

... and he can rest with it too.