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## Turning music into real estate

Basically, for Labour, music development meant finding a garage to rehearse in.




**Michael Briguglio**


23 May 2013, 12:00am

 Got garage space?

'Got garage space?'

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The Labour government's decision to appoint William Mangion to find rehearsal rooms for music groups is a bad mixture of partisan favours, rash decisions and ignorance of the music scene. It also smacks of a patronizing top-down attitudes of 'charity', rather than 'rights'.

During the 2013 electoral campaign, Alternattiva Demokratika – The Green Party put forward various proposals with the aim of helping to develop Maltese music and culture. These proposals had organic roots. For example, having been in Malta's music scene since my teenage years, and having been in the performing and recording sphere with metal and rock bands since 1992, I, for one felt that this area was one which deserved articulation and support in the political arena. Hence the belief in giving this issue the importance it deserves.

Indeed, AD proposed that the Ministry for Culture should have a division that focuses on the development of musical talent and culture. This division should provide facilities and space for musicians, the creation of a system of soft loans to help them develop and the promotion of Malta as an international music venue.

AD also proposed that the definition of music should not only include traditional music, classical music, jazz, rock music and pop music but also, others like metal. To this one can add a myriad of genres and sub-divisions.

Just as AD's proposal was unveiled, it was warmly received by many people in the various music scenes. Shortly after, Joseph Muscat, in one of his tent-events, announced that Labour would help bands but the way he spoke clearly showed that he did not know what he was speaking about.

Basically, for Labour, music development meant finding a garage to rehearse in.

Now this has been confirmed, and music has been turned into real estate. While it is true that some bands have problems in finding rehearsal space, this problem is secondary compared with other problems such as double-standards from above as regards live performance facilities, and Malta's geographical insularity which, at times, hinders certain aspects of music development.

(A) And forming part of the singing team of the 'Taghna Lkoll' song does not make one qualified in the field of music development. Just when countries like UK are developing specialized academic degrees in music — such as the degree in Heavy Metal at New College Nottingham (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-22501494>), Malta banalizes music development.

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Michael Briguglio is a sociologist and senior lecturer at the University of Malta

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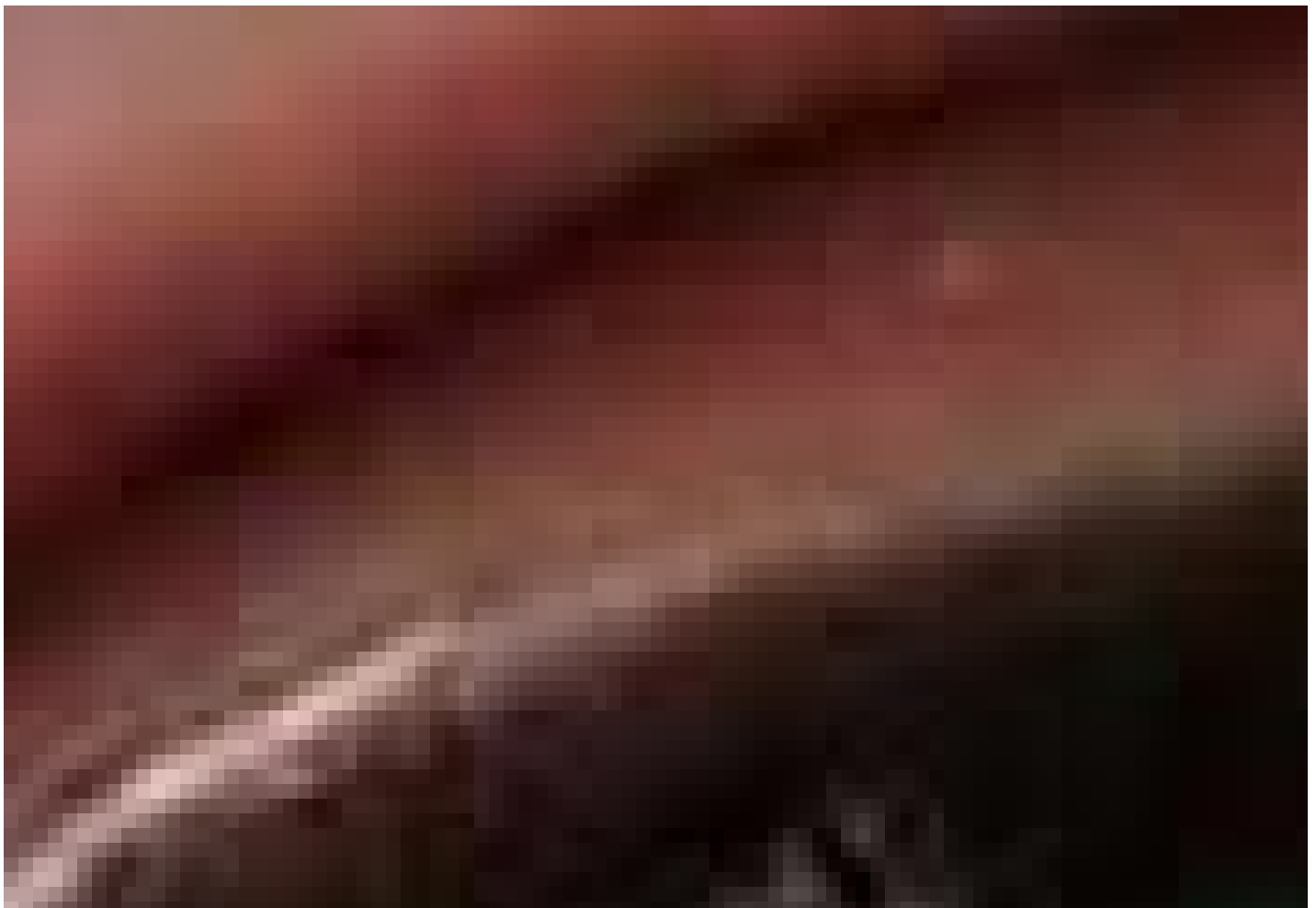
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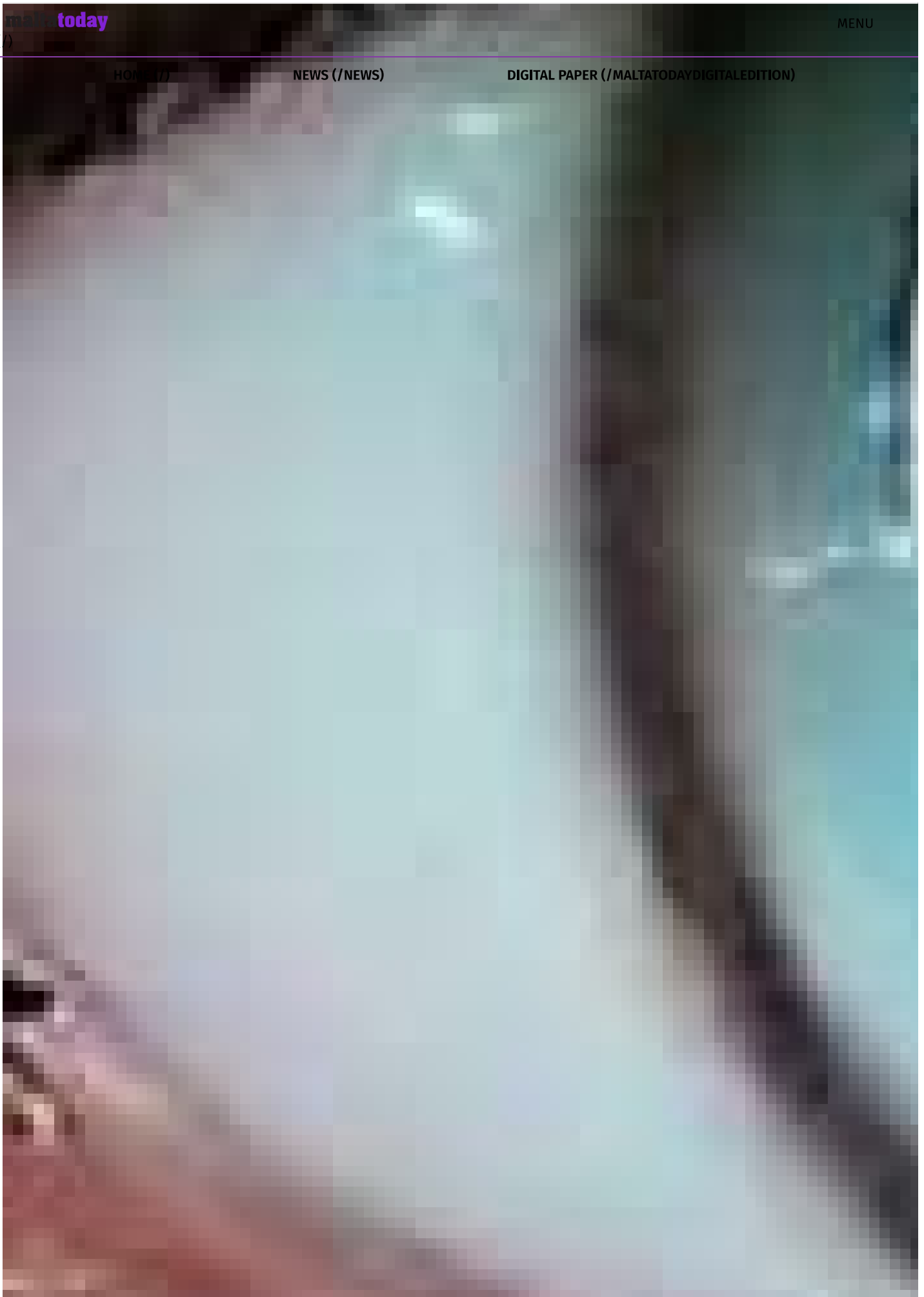
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• We need to improve our musical standards in Malta by providing better access to musical education. Providing garage space is not going to make a difference to the standard of a finished and performed musical work.