# House Party turns a comedy set into a plea for homes and culture



Chakira Alin’s one‑woman show House Party arrives at the Pleasance Courtyard as a piece of intimate, politically charged theatre: a tender, often funny lament for the disappearing rituals that once stitched communities together. According to the original review in The Guardian, Alin’s central conceit — the lost art of the house party — becomes a sharp, personal metaphor for a generation squeezed by shrinking homes, soaring costs and the social erosion that follows. The performance places a buoyant humour beside a steady undertow of anger and fear, making the small domestic world on stage feel like a public case study.

On a homely set strewn with balloons, heart‑shaped cushions and a cocktail shaker, Alin plays Skip, a young woman from east London who loves Hackney enough to wear it on her T‑shirt. The reviewer observed several sparkling comic routines — Skip fantasising about “white‑pillared Georgians”, browsing Rightmove with the same hunger other people bring to Pornhub, and complaining that Skins sold her a lie — that sit comfortably alongside sharper political beats. The Pleasance listing for the festival run underlines the show’s mix of music, comedy and political urgency, and flags practical details for audiences including warnings about strong language.

But the laughter in House Party is threaded with a recurring, darker note: there is no space, the show argues, to host the kinds of gatherings that once made neighbourhoods. That point is not merely anecdotal theatre. Shelter’s recent reporting found record numbers of children in temporary accommodation and rising rough sleeping, and the charity has urged urgent investment in social housing and better protections for families. The play’s recurrent anxiety about Skip and her mother’s housing insecurity — a threat that simmers beneath the comedy — gives those statistics a human face.

Alin’s material also tracks the less visible costs of neighbourhood change outlined in academic commentary. Research described in an LSE blog about gentrification through young people’s eyes stresses that displacement is often cultural: new shops, venues and social norms can render familiar behaviours — from late‑night parties to communal living — as awkward or unwelcome. House Party dramatises exactly that sense of being out of place in the place you grew up, suggesting that gentrification’s damage is as much about expelled social life as it is about bricks and rent levels.

The show extends its critique to the cultural sector itself. As Skip recounts her exit from drama school and the cramped prospects that follow, the narrative echoes wider reporting that the UK arts remain skewed towards those with private means. A recent analysis in The Guardian found that leadership at major arts organisations is disproportionately privately educated, arguing that cuts to arts education and rising costs have narrowed routes into the profession. Alin’s performance — alternately comic and forensic — frames those structural barriers as part of the same landscape that shutters house parties and crowds out working‑class creatives.

House Party is not without dramaturgical faults: the review noted a subplot about a friend sleeping rough that needs further development, and a couple of supporting figures who could have been fuller. Yet Alin’s pacing, her command of theatrical technique and a charisma that “burns” on stage carry the piece; where the script is spare she fills the space with lived detail and intensity. Festival audiences looking for dates, running times and access information can consult the Pleasance event page for booking particulars.

Taken together, the piece feels less like nostalgia and more like a demand — for housing policy that preserves the everyday spaces of social life, for arts funding that widens access, and for a politics that recognises the civic function of domestic culture. Shelter’s calls for expanded social housing and protections, and academic accounts of cultural displacement, give House Party a wider frame: the play is both testimony and provocation, an urgent reminder that a city’s soul can be measured in the parties it can no longer host.

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* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/aug/19/house-party-review-chakira-alin-pleasance-courtyard-edinburgh), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/aug/19/house-party-review-chakira-alin-pleasance-courtyard-edinburgh)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/aug/19/house-party-review-chakira-alin-pleasance-courtyard-edinburgh), [[3]](https://www.pleasance.co.uk/event/house-party), [[4]](https://www.rightmove.co.uk/?locale=en)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/aug/19/house-party-review-chakira-alin-pleasance-courtyard-edinburgh), [[5]](https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_release/children_in_temporary_accommodation_hits_another_shameful_record_as_rough_sleeping_soars)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/aug/19/house-party-review-chakira-alin-pleasance-courtyard-edinburgh), [[6]](https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/gentrification-through-young-peoples-eyes/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/aug/19/house-party-review-chakira-alin-pleasance-courtyard-edinburgh), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2025/feb/21/working-class-creatives-dont-stand-a-chance-in-uk-today-leading-artists-warn)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/aug/19/house-party-review-chakira-alin-pleasance-courtyard-edinburgh), [[3]](https://www.pleasance.co.uk/event/house-party)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/aug/19/house-party-review-chakira-alin-pleasance-courtyard-edinburgh), [[5]](https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_release/children_in_temporary_accommodation_hits_another_shameful_record_as_rough_sleeping_soars), [[6]](https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/gentrification-through-young-peoples-eyes/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/aug/19/house-party-review-chakira-alin-pleasance-courtyard-edinburgh> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2025/aug/19/house-party-review-chakira-alin-pleasance-courtyard-edinburgh> - Chris Wiegand’s review of Chakira Alin’s solo show House Party at Pleasance Courtyard, Edinburgh, describes a buoyant yet bitter performance that interrogates gentrification, austerity and the housing crisis in east London. Alin’s central metaphor is the disappearance of house parties, used to explore shrinking living spaces, rising costs and weakened social cohesion. The reviewer notes clever comic sequences, references to RightMove and Skins, and a homely stage design. He highlights the persistent threat of homelessness for the protagonist and her mother, and praises Alin’s charisma and incisive observations about class, inherited wealth in the arts, and dispossession, and theatrical skill.
3. <https://www.pleasance.co.uk/event/house-party> - The Pleasance event page for House Party describes Chakira Alin’s one-woman show running at Pleasance Courtyard during the Edinburgh Fringe. It summarises the premise: a young woman from East London aims to revive house parties while navigating gentrification, the housing crisis and generational inequality. The listing provides performance dates, ticket prices, duration, age guidance and access information, and warns of strong language. It emphasises the show’s mix of music, comedy and political urgency and gives box office contact details. Practical booking information, pricing, and accessibility provisions are listed to aid potential attendees planning to see the production at the festival.
4. <https://www.rightmove.co.uk/?locale=en> - Rightmove is the UK’s largest online property portal, offering comprehensive property listings for sale and to rent across England, Scotland and Wales. The homepage promotes search tools for buyers and renters, market news, sold price data and the Rightmove House Price Index. Users can create alerts, save properties, view floorplans and local information such as schools. As a widely used marketplace, Rightmove aggregates estate agent listings and provides market analysis and commentary cited by journalists and researchers. The site’s prominence makes it a recognisable reference when performers, as in the review, imagine people browsing property portals to find new homes.
5. <https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_release/children_in_temporary_accommodation_hits_another_shameful_record_as_rough_sleeping_soars> - Shelter’s press release highlights the deepening housing emergency in England, reporting record numbers of children in temporary accommodation and rising rough sleeping. It states that 164,040 children were homeless in temporary accommodation and 126,040 households were living in temporary housing, with substantial increases year‑on‑year. Shelter calls for urgent investment in social housing and criticises policy failures and austerity measures that have worsened homelessness. The release references official autumn 2024 snapshot figures showing 4,667 people sleeping rough on a single night in England, and urges government action to reverse the trend, protect families and expand affordable, secure housing options and support.
6. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/gentrification-through-young-peoples-eyes/> - The LSE blog post 'Gentrification through young people’s eyes' examines how neighbourhood change affects young residents’ sense of belonging and social life. Drawing on interviews and research, it argues displacement is not merely physical but cultural, as new arrivals and rising costs alter what is considered acceptable behaviour and who 'fits' locally. Young people describe feeling excluded from revamped shops, venues and social networks, perceiving judgement from newcomers and losing informal communal spaces such as house parties. The piece highlights the emotional impact of gentrification on identity and community ties and calls for policies that protect social cohesion alongside regeneration.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2025/feb/21/working-class-creatives-dont-stand-a-chance-in-uk-today-leading-artists-warn> - The Guardian analysis reports that the UK arts sector remains skewed towards the privately educated and socially privileged, warning that working‑class creatives face barriers to entry. It finds almost a third of leaders at major Arts Council England-funded organisations attended private schools, and many went to Oxford or Cambridge. Contributors including directors and actors describe cuts to arts education, dwindling youth theatre, and rising costs that discourage participation. The piece highlights reduced state support, the collapse in arts GCSE take-up and calls for better funding and schemes to nurture diverse talent, arguing systemic change is needed to broaden access urgently.