

LEGACY PRESS PACK

Rich Mix, 35-47 Bethnal Green Rd, London E1 6LA
7:30pm Friday 28th, Saturday 29th & 5pm Sunday 30th October



Examining the impact of the Olympic legacy in East London and corporate investment on estate residents and their health, LEGACY is a celebration of community, an analysis of class and part of an artistic and social groundswell to end the so-called housing crisis.

1 in 20 people in Newham is homeless.

Nowhere is the process of social cleansing clearer to see than in the Olympic borough of Newham.

***“Strong, well acted take on what the housing crisis is doing to us.”
Aditya Chakraborty, The Guardian***

<https://richmix.org.uk/events/theatre/legacy>

About the Project

LEGACY explores the impact (both good and bad) of the London 2012 Olympics on the local community and has been researched and developed over 5 years. Inspired by 75-year-old Mary Finch who is fighting to save her home on the Carpenters Estate from private development, LEGACY was work-shopped with local residents at Theatre Royal Stratford East and then staged as a reading at Rich Mix in 2017 where it sold out, receiving excellent reviews. After successfully applying for Arts Council funding we have now been invited to join Rich Mix's Culture for a Changing City season and showcase the play in full production at the end of September in 2018.

The Sunday performance will be followed by a Q&A with Geraldine Denning from ASH (Architects for Social Housing); Focus E15; Professor Paul Watt and Sally Zlotowitz from the Housing and Mental Health Network.

About Blueprint Theatre

Blueprint Theatre was formed by Mark Rose, Sally Grey and Mark Sands in 2009. Based in the famous Bevin Court Estate in Islington, Blueprint have co-devised and produced five productions and two exhibitions, all with local residents and artists. These include *This Story of Yours*, *Women Laughing* (OFFIE nominated) at The Old Red Lion, and Bryony Lavery's *Frozen* and an accompanying art exhibition at Park Theatre, which received 4 and 5 star reviews across the board. Blueprint's film, *Every Time I Think of You*, about 80's Islington, premiered at Screen on the Green. LEGACY is the first full-length play both written and produced by Blueprint.

About the Writers

LEGACY is the fourth full-length play by writers Sally Grey and Susan Avery. Previously PLAYGROUND won best new play at The Studio Theatre Paddington; RAIN THEN SQUALLY SHOWERS was researched and developed in Hartlepool with Arts Council Funding and performed at working men's clubs in the North East and JUNK won the British Writers Guild's Plays of Promise award in 2015.

Creatives

Director	Tracy Ryan
Jason	Adam Elms
Richie and the Mayor	Nick Khan
Katie Media	Jacqui Mackenzie Gray
Marian (based on Mary Finch)	Shenagh Govan
Jackie	Sally Grey
Leah	Katie Males

Real Life Inspiration

Mary Finch and The Carpenters Estate



Mary Finch lives on the Carpenters Estate in the family home she bought under Right To Buy over 40 years ago. Carpenters Estate is directly adjacent to the Olympic development site, Stratford International Rail Station, and Stratford City Westfield Shopping District. It is a community built in what became a prime and sought-after location, and saw Newham council begin a process of regeneration, with plans to demolish most of the estate.

Mary has been a vociferous campaigner against proposed bids to redevelop the estate, which inevitably and invariably mean demolition, with residents rehoused away from their support networks and families. One such campaign, set up in 2012, is Carpenters Against Regeneration Plans (CARP!). This was a group of residents who lived on the Carpenters Estate in Stratford East London campaigning for a fair deal from Newham Council, who planned to remove the residents and demolish the estate. Unfortunately, CARP no longer exists as so many people have been moved on, leaving over 400 homes currently unoccupied on the estate.

Focus E15

The Focus E15 campaign was born in September 2013 when a group of young mothers were served eviction notices by East Thames Housing Association after Newham Council cut its funding to the Focus E15 hostel for young homeless people. When they approached the Council for help, the mothers were advised that, due to cuts to housing benefit and the lack of affordable housing in London, they would have to accept private rented accommodation as far away as Manchester, Hastings and Birmingham.

This attempt by Newham Council to displace the mothers from London, removing them and their children from their families and local support networks, is just one example of a city-wide process of social cleansing, with low income people being forced to the fringes of London and beyond by soaring rents, benefit cuts, and a shortage of social housing. This prompted the mothers to get organised and demand 'social housing, not social cleansing!'

Five years later, the campaign is still going strong, attracting people from all walks of life to join the fight for decent and secure housing for all.

There are currently 1 in 20 homeless people in Newham. The Olympic Legacy has not been all that was promised to many local residents. Statistical improvements relating to health, education and employment are easily and conveniently touted when some of the poorest people are replaced by those more affluent. Nowhere is the process of social cleansing clearer to see than in the Olympic borough of Newham.