

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release – 17 July 2025 – Edinburgh

# VENUE 13 Announces Official Incorporation at Venue 13 Fringe LTD and plans for upcoming Trust, Investment Opportunities, and Community Call for Action

- Venue 13 Fringe Ltd officially incorporated with Companies House
- Launch of Venue 13 Trust underway to support nonprofit arts work
- Crowdfunding campaign now live to support this new chapter
- Opportunities available for investors and strategic partners
- Invitation to community: Help shape the future of a landmark Fringe venue

**Edinburgh, 17 July 2025.** It is with great excitement that Directors Vanesa Kelly and Ian Garrett announce the incorporation of Venue 13 Fringe Ltd with Companies House, formalising the venue's decades-long commitment to artistry, innovation, and community at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. This incorporation marks new beginnings for a venue that has quietly, but powerfully, supported independent and experimental voices since 1980.

Previously operated as a collaboration between artists and institutions, Venue 13 now becomes an official legal entity on its own- allowing it to grow beyond its August roots into a year-round cultural force. Alongside the new company, plans are already underway for the creation of Venue 13 Trust, a not-for-profit arts initiative that will carry forward the venue's mission into outreach, education, and social impact beyond August and the Fringe.



## A Legacy and a Vision

For more than 40 years, Venue 13 has been a trusted, artist-first space offering a caring, transparent, and flexible platform for emerging and international performance makers. It has hosted carefully selected productions annually, serving as a launchpad for risk-taking, genre-defying work - and, for many, a first step into the world's largest arts festival.

Founded in 1980 by The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, formerly the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, it has always provided a platform for emerging artists, including a young David Tennant. It was later operated in partnership with the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD), which took over the venue in 1996 as its sole manager until 2020, when the COVID19 pandemic closed the festival for two full years.

With changes at RWCMD, the college decided that it wouldn't be returning to the venue and cleared out the last of its equipment in August 2024. Ian Garrett, who started his Fringe career at Venue 13 with the CalArts Festival Theatre in 2008, and later formed the venue's partnership with York University in Toronto in 2013, proposed taking over as the last bits were loaded onto a truck bound for Cardiff.

In 2025, Venue 13 returns stronger than ever, with a vision not just to present performances, but to build a community rooted in equity, sustainability, and creative bravery. Having served as a place for emerging artists to find support in coming to the Fringe, often for the first time, Garrett and Kelly seek to honour the legacy of this storied venue by committing to a transparent and artist-first model.



## What Changes Now

With official incorporation, Venue 13 Fringe Ltd can now:

- Offer shareholding opportunities to mission-aligned partners
- Run year-round programming and educational initiatives
- Operate workshops and promote local artists as a local hub
- Deliver full-service artist support: PR, housing, tech, and touring
- Develop a permanent digital archive and hybrid programming platform
- Establish Venue 13 Trust as a registered charity for outreach and social good

In his 17 years at the Edinburgh Fringe, Ian Garrett has been involved with dozens of productions and was the founder of the Fringe Sustainable Practice Award, launched in 2010 in partnership with Culture for Climate Scotland (formerly Creative Carbon Scotland), which ran for eight years. As the long-time director of the Canadian non-profit Centre for Sustainable Practice in the Arts and Professor of Ecological Design for Performance at York University in Toronto, Garrett brings decades of expertise in sustainable performance making — expertise that will underpin Venue 13's future approach. He is also known for ambitious, tech-integrated Fringe projects, such as *Transmission* (2017), which used a mobile app to link 29 scenes across Edinburgh as part of Assembly's short-lived FuturePlay festival, and the hybrid *Aionos* (2023) at ZOO Venues, which featured a split cast and crew working between Edinburgh and Toronto. These kinds of experiments will find a natural home at Venue 13.

Vanesa Kelly, originally from Argentina, has lived in Edinburgh for over a decade and is an active member of Scotland's vegan, festival, and sustainable technology communities. Before establishing herself as an independent arts and public relations consultant, she worked with Hydrogen Vehicle Systems Ltd (HVS), promoting clean transportation and infrastructure in the trucking industry. A community-focused visual artist, Kelly brings a wide range of experience—from arriving as a newcomer to Edinburgh, to organizing grassroots events, producing arts initiatives, and contributing to Scotland's start-up scene. She's passionate about making Venue 13 a place that offers meaningful, diverse support systems for visiting artists.

## Why Now?

"Performers are being silenced—not by lack of creativity, but by financial and structural barriers." says Ian Garrett. "As the Fringe grows, so must the approaches of the venues that serve its artists. We're creating an infrastructure to help those artists not just survive, but thrive."

Since COVID, there's been a hunger for new frameworks—ethical, sustainable, tech-integrated—and Venue 13 is answering that call. This year's programme is anchored in urgent climate call for action and community-rooted work:

- **Climate Change Theatre Action 2025** – Global launch of the 10th anniversary short-play festival in partnership with the Arts & Climate Initiative, Traverse Theatre, and others. The CCTA features 50 Climate Related short plays answering to the theme "The Time Is Now" which will be read and performed throughout the month in this large global gathering with one goal in mind: Reminding the public that Climate Action is urgent and takes all of us.
- **AI Campfire** – A 20-minute immersive media experience blending AI, folklore, and ecological grief through integrated design and storytelling. This project considers the place of technology in the future of our relationship with the natural environment, what we can learn about making sustainable choices today from stories of the past, and the ethical considerations these require us to make a dazzling sensory event.

## The Call to Action

**Venue 13 is inviting the public to support this next chapter.** A **crowdfunding campaign** is now live, offering the community a chance to help build the future of the Fringe together. Every donation will help develop the physical space, support the creation of Venue 13 Trust, and fund this year's forward-thinking programme.

The crowdfunding campaign for Venue 13 is now live at [crowdfund.edfringe.com/p/venue13returns](https://crowdfund.edfringe.com/p/venue13returns) , offering supporters a direct way to contribute to the revival of this landmark Fringe venue. With a target of £13,000, funds will go toward upgrading essential technical infrastructure, supporting artist services like housing and promotion, developing hybrid and XR capabilities, and launching Market 13, a public-facing space for food, crafts, and community engagement. Contributions at all levels are welcome and come with meaningful perks, from shout-outs to signed anthologies. Every donation helps shape an inclusive, sustainable, artist-first model for the next 40 years of Fringe.

But this is more than a call for donations.

For those looking to play a deeper role in shaping the arts ecosystem, Venue 13 Fringe Ltd is offering an investment opportunity for partners interested in its sustainable creative infrastructure.

"We're not just asking for support," says Vanesa Kelly, "We're offering an invitation to co-create a space that puts artists first and fosters bold, essential work."

Interested parties are encouraged to connect with Vanesa and Ian directly to discuss the full investment pack, business plan, and long-term growth model.



## A New Fringe Model

Venue 13 offers a proven and ethical alternative to the traditional Fringe venue model - one that responds to growing demand for flexibility, care, and community-centred creativity. At a time when the Fringe produces over 2.6 million ticket sales, the need for responsible, artist-forward infrastructure has never been greater.

## The 13-Month Plan

From Fringe season to year-round programming, Venue 13's offerings will now include:

- **Venue 13+:** Hybrid, site-specific, and off-site performances
- **Market 13:** A public indoor space which combines food, craft, and events
- **Venue 13 Trust:** Nonprofit community arts hub with plans for year-round support
- **Onward Touring Support:** Post-Fringe tour planning for participating artists
- **Digital Hub:** Archive, digital premieres, and interactive programming

## About the Directors

**Ian Garrett:** International producer, designer, and researcher specializing in XR and sustainable touring. A veteran of the Fringe with more than 40 shows which have been at Venue 13, Summerhall, Assembly, and ZOO. Started with Venue 13 in 2008.

**Vanesa Kelly:** Argentinian-born, Edinburgh-based artist, writer, and producer with years of experience in event production, PR, community engagement and corporate relations. Sole proprietor of V-Kind arts and playwright and producer of this year's debut A.I Campfire. Vanesa is passionate about creating spaces for art, dialogue, and mutual support.

## Venue 13 Fringe Ltd and Trust will aim to:

1. Revive and grow a beloved Fringe venue
2. Provide accessible paths to the Fringe for all artists
3. Enable unique, intimate experiences, workshops, and tastings
4. Launch Market 13 as this year's vendor space offering yummy plant based food
5. Offer hands-on workshops (e.g., broom-making, DnD)
6. Host digital-first and experimental performances
7. Lead research on sustainable touring practices
8. Align with ESG goals, SDGs, and cultural impact targets
9. Reclaim community space in a costly city
10. Keep growing! Because art matters - not just in August, but always.

## VENUE 13 FRINGE LTD

A venue that reflects the best of what the Fringe can be.  
Centering artistry. Grounded in care. Powered by community.

## Join the Movement

Venue 13 invites you to be part of its next chapter: as a supporter, partner, or co-creator.

For media enquiries, investment pack requests, or to get involved:

Contact Vanesa or Ian on [info@venue13.com](mailto:info@venue13.com) or [vk@v-kind.co.uk](mailto:vk@v-kind.co.uk)

Crowdfunding link: <https://crowdfund.edfringe.com/p/venue13returns>

For Venue schedule, tickets and more info, visit [www.venue13.com](http://www.venue13.com), and follow us on all the social channels on @venue13fringe

**Ends**