

Lady Boys charity boost

It is one of the most popular and colourful shows at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, with a glittering cabaret performing to more than 30,000 people this summer.

But the Lady Boys of Bangkok are also raising thousands of pounds for two grateful Edinburgh charities.

The performers hand over an entire show each year to the Edinburgh Taxi Trade Children's Outing, which provides an annual fun day out for over 100 special kids in the capital.



75th Edinburgh Taxi Outing for kids- PHOTO Alan Simpson Photography

They have also adopted Maggie's Edinburgh as a charity partner, giving festival audiences the chance to donate money to help the centre provide support to families affected by cancer.

The Lady Boys of Bangkok has been a fixture at the Fringe for 25 years, making the "biggest party in town" one of the longest running spectacles at the world's biggest arts festival.

Tour director Binky Beaumont explained how around 15 years ago, the performers, from Thailand, decided to support good causes in the capital.

He said: "Every year we come to Edinburgh and the idea was to give something back to the city. The Black Cabs' children's

outing is an institution we are very keen to support. We just asked 'what can we do?' and it snowballed from there.

"Maggie's does amazing work but all charities have struggled since the pandemic. So whenever people book tickets to our show online they can add a donation to Maggie's."

Maggie's Edinburgh was the first of its kind to open in the UK 27 years ago. The centre, at the Western General Hospital, provides free practical, emotional and psychological support for anybody affected by a diagnosis of cancer, but needs thousands of pounds every day to operate.

Its partnership with The Lady Boys of Bangkok, which began last summer, not only raises vital funds but also helps raise awareness of Maggie's work. Last year the show raised £10,000 for the centre.

Samantha Lea, fundraising manager for Maggie's Edinburgh, said: "The Lady Boys have really supported us over the last couple of years, with collections at performances not just in Edinburgh but in other locations.

"Last year they raised £10,000 for us so it's a significant amount of money, but it also raises awareness of what we do and how we support people. It really makes a difference."

For the last 15 years, the Lady Boys have handed over a night dubbed "The Black Cab Ball" to the Edinburgh Taxi Trade Children's Outing. The charity not only raises money from ticket sales but also enables organisers to give something back to those who help provide their inspirational days out.

Since the first annual Black Cab Ball, the event has raised around £60,000 for outings.

David Smiles-Watt, treasurer of the Edinburgh Taxi Trade Children's Outing, said: "We've been doing the outing for 75 years now. It's all funded through donations and a night like

this helps finance all this.

“Over the years the money raised by the Black Cab Ball has been a tremendous help. The outing lets the kids be kids and enjoy themselves. We have to plan three years ahead and the money from the Black Cab Ball lets me know we can keep going.”

Mr Taweesak Samdangrit, the longest serving cast member after 21 years, said: “Edinburgh took us into their hearts when we first arrived as a small production. This is our adopted home and we wanted to give something back to all our friends and amazing audiences.

“We do the extra show for the taxi charity as a huge thank you and look forward to it every year. We are also extremely proud to support a fantastic local charity, Maggie’s, at every single performance by bucket collections and the option to donate when booking online.”