

# **Fringe appoints new Chief Executive**

## **Tony Lankester has been appointed the new Chief Executive of Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society.**

He was previously the CEO of Riverside Studios for five years and before that he ran National Arts Festival South Africa for 12 years, continuing as a Trustee after stepping down from his position.

In his time at Riverside he has helped the charity navigate the Covid pandemic, oversaw a restructuring of the company's debt through administration and, ultimately, a sale of the Studios to a newly established Trust which, today, continues to present a mix of theatre, film, festivals and comedy, and is a significant cultural hub in West London.

He has been a podcast presenter, delivered a TedX talk on the power of the arts, and guest lectured on branding and arts marketing at Rhodes University's Journalism School, where he was recently named as one of that institution's Top 50 Alumni. Tony began his career in journalism starting at SAfm including presenting the station's Saturday breakfast show.

Chair of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, Benny Higgins, said: "I am delighted that Tony will be joining the Fringe Society this Spring. Tony brings a wealth of experience from his previous roles, and his insights from both a cultural and commercial background will ensure the Fringe Society can meet the needs of the wider Fringe community. As the Fringe builds towards its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, Tony's leadership will be key in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Fringe

Society and Edinburgh Festival Fringe.”

Tony said: “Edinburgh Festival Fringe occupies a rare and special place in the hearts and minds of artists the world over and it has played a formative role in so many stellar careers and millions of life-changing moments for audiences. Staying true to that legacy, while being asked to help shape and guide its future, is a privilege.

“The arts environment is hugely challenging at the moment and the world a difficult and noisy place. Now, more than ever, there is a need for what the Fringe is and for what it can be – for artists, audiences, producers, venues, and the people of Edinburgh.

“Shona has been an inspirational, principled and passionate leader and advocate for the Fringe during some of the toughest years in its history, navigating some extraordinary challenges with diplomacy, empathy, focus and determination. She hands it over in great shape, and I hope to do her hard work justice.”

Outgoing CEO, Shona McCarthy, intimated her intention to resign from the position in October last year. Mr Lankester will take up his role as Chief Executive in April 2025.



Tony Lankester