

Career Profile: Chris Jaeger, chief executive, Worcester Live

By [Ellie Stevenson](#) Arts Hub

Monday, October 29, 2007

- [Print this page](#)



Chris Jaeger, chief executive, Worcester Live.

Chris Jaeger is chief executive of Worcester Live as well as chairman of the Guild of Drama Adjudicators, MD of Routes Music (a folk agency) and MD of Speaking Volumes, a speaking agency, which includes Bill Bryson. After taking a degree in History and Education at Reading University, Chris taught for 18 years. His experience also includes work as a freelance actor, professional drummer, agent and promoter.

Worcester Live is Huntingdon Hall, The Swan Theatre, the Worcester Festival, Shakespeare at the Commandery and the Ghost Walk of Worcester.

What do you do all day?

Programme the venues: Huntingdon Hall and the Swan Theatre. Huntingdon Hall is Worcestershire's premier live music venue, a Grade II listed ex-Methodist Chapel, staging up to 200 events a year. The Swan Theatre is a busy community resource - it also acts as a home venue for local amateur theatre groups and we work closely with education to provide an insight into the world of theatre and dance. I also organise the other three arms of the business, one of which was a new venture for this year - an outdoor Shakespeare at the local Civil War centre in the middle of June. Despite the terrible weather it was hugely popular and well attended - and looks set to become an annual event. Other things I do include raising funding for the organisation (sponsorship and trust applications) and attending many meetings.

What are you doing today?

Lecturing at the University of Worcester in the morning and writing letters and making phone calls in the afternoon. This evening, I'm attending the show at the Swan Theatre.

What's the best thing about your job?

The incredible variety, and working in a job you feel passionate about.

And the worst thing?

Working 16 hours a day, 7 days a week.

How did you get into it?

I was approached in 1995, after Huntingdon Hall ran into serious financial difficulties. I was offered the chance to be Director, to try to turn it around, so I took it!

What do you think makes you good at your job?

Passion and the gift of the gab!

You used to be an actor, and still direct a variety of work. Have you ever regretted giving up acting?

No, I've never regretted it. I've never really had enough talent to be a successful professional actor.

What's been your biggest achievement in your career so far?

Saving the Swan Theatre from closure, and starting the Worcester Festival, which began in 2003. It was hugely successful, with great weather and 132 events, ranging from outdoor Shakespeare and Blondie tribute bands to riverside art exhibitions. The Festival has grown very quickly and is now an annual event. Every third year it incorporates the Three Choirs Fringe Festival. This year there were 364 events registered.

What challenges do you expect to face in the coming year?

A lack of revenue funding and finding new ways to popularise the Arts, to keep the momentum going.

Any advice for someone trying to get into this field?

Get used to long hours and being poor!

If you could have a complete career change and do something else, what would you go for?

I would work for an animal charity, in the field.

