

Chancellor,

Dirk Maggs is an award-winning writer and director who has pushed the boundaries of radio drama to create iconic entertainment shows. Dirk is particularly known for his work in comedy and science fiction, notably bringing an adaptation of Douglas Adams' 'The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy' to the airwaves.

Growing up in the 1960s, Dirk was influenced by the pop and rock culture of the time and had his heart set on becoming either a drummer or an actor. Recognising that he might need another profession to fall back on, he enrolled to study drama and trained to become a teacher at King Alfred's College in Winchester. While he recalls having a wonderful four years preparing and performing theatre shows, he discovered two major flaws in his career plans. Firstly, he couldn't act and secondly, he didn't enjoy the crowd control involved in teaching children.

As Dirk approached the end of his degree, he was accepted by the BBC to become a trainee studio manager. He went on to build a career in radio comedy, producing shows including The News Huddlines starring Roy Hudd and June Whitfield. By the early nineties, Dirk had forged a partnership with DC Comics and carved out a niche creating cinematic-style radio dramas featuring popular comic book characters, including Superman and Batman. The author, Douglas Adams, heard these and approached Dirk to adapt the later novels in 'The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy' series for radio. The project eventually broadcast after a 15-year gap, featuring many of the show's original cast.

Today, Dirk is considered as a pioneer of the 'audio movie'; an art form which he describes as bypassing the optic nerve to sneak in through your ears and spark a more vivid picture in your mind than TV or film. As well as forging ground-breaking collaborations with authors including Neil Gaiman, he continues to inspire new generations of programme makers by working alongside staff and students at BU and at other institutions.

Chancellor, I have the honour to present Dirk Maggs and I ask you to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Arts, *honoris causa*.