

Actor schooled in Shakespeare



Tim Pigott-Smith plays the rebellious Hotspur and Michele Dotrice is his firebrand wife Kate in "Henry IV, Part One," on WTVS-TV, Channel 56.

By ETHEL SIMMONS

Tim Pigott-Smith was the only one in his class to become a Shakespearean actor.

Which is not as surprising as it sounds. After all, Pigott-Smith, who is from Warwickshire in England, attended William Shakespeare's grammar school. "It's fairly well documented," he said, "attending to the historical fact of the Bard's early schooling."

At 16, Pigott-Smith's family moved to Stratford-on-Avon, where his parents still live.

But although he enjoys doing Shakespearean roles, the successful young stage and television performer doesn't limit himself to such theatrical strong stuff.

"One does whatever one is offered," he said.

This summer he did an MGM film "Clash of the Titans." The slender actor played the hero's friend. "I get killed by a 12-foot scorpion."

EVERYTHING IS DONE with something called Dynamation, where small models are used. "When I did the fight with the scorpion, it wasn't there. I was bashing away at nothing. It was quite fun."

On Broadway Pigott-Smith starred as Dr. Watson in the hit production of "Sherlock Holmes." Shakespearean roles have been a

specialty, and Pigott-Smith has played leads for the Royal Shakespeare Company for several years.

Last season he played Angelo in "Measure for Measure" on the Public Broadcasting Service's (PBS) first television series of "The Shakespeare Plays."

The first series was shown a year ago in England and the United States. The second series debuted last week with "Richard II."

"Henry IV, Part I" will be shown from 8-10:30 p.m. Wednesday, with Pigott-Smith portraying Hotspur. "He's a bit of a firecracker," he said, describing the character. "He's impulsive, difficult to control. He's spoken of as a hero by King Henry."

"He's honorable and represents the old-fashioned code of chivalry. The age of honor dies with Hotspur's death."

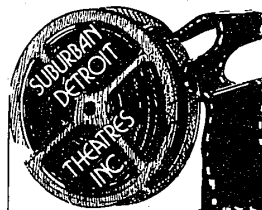
The character of Hotspur dies in "Henry IV, Part I." Pigott-Smith makes a brief appearance as Hotspur in "Henry IV, Part II," which will be shown from 8-11 p.m. April 9.

THE PBS SERIES plans to cover, over a six-year cycle, all 37 of Shakespeare's dramatic works. "I think the principal of it is marvelous," Pigott-Smith said. "Shakespeare is what I love most."

During his 10-year career, the actor has appeared in productions of 10 Shakespearean plays.

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