

## **T. Paul Pfeiffer, Ph.D. Class of 1971**

### **Professor, Actor**

Since beginning his career as an assistant professor of Theatre thirty years ago at Salisbury University, Dr. Pfeiffer has been in active pursuit of his two academic loves – History and the Theatre. He completed his Master's degree at the University of Maryland in 1985 in Theatre History and Directing and his Doctoral degree at the Union Institute in 1992 in Theatre History and Performance. In recognition of his long service and notable accomplishments in both the academic and professional theatre, Dr. Pfeiffer was received the prestigious Distinguished Faculty Award for 2000-2001. He has since been named Full Professor of Theatre and continues, after twenty years, to serve as Artistic Director of the Bobbi Biron Theatre Program.

He has also extended his academic studies to include professional training in Renaissance and Baroque dance at the Amherst Early Music Institute and in acting at the Herbert Berghoff Studio in New York. Most of his professional acting training, however, has been in the classical theatre, engaging his primary passion since childhood – Shakespeare. Dr. Pfeiffer has studied at the Folger Theatre in Washington, D.C. and, in 1998, at the Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London. Here he was one of twenty-four teachers from the U. S. selected to participate in a three-week workshop entitled *Shakespeare in Performance* taught by theatre professional from Great Britain, Australia and the U.S. He has continued to combine these areas of expertise not only in his teaching but also in the productions, which he has directed for the University's Bobbi Biron Theatre Program. He teaches all of the Theatre History courses and most of the Advanced Acting courses for the program as well, which places a strong emphasis on the study of classical acting.

Serving as Artistic Director since 1989, Dr. Pfeiffer has led the theatre's development to wide recognition for the quality of its theatrical seasons and the rigors of its acting training program. Most recently, this leadership has garnered a \$500,000 endowment for the program and a new theatre major as a recognized course of study. As a direct result of these twenty years of leadership, the Bobbi Biron Theatre Program enjoys a solid reputation for quality educational theatre and is particularly noted for its strong emphasis on training in the classical theatre.

Dr. Pfeiffer also answered the call of the professional theatre where he has acted for the Riverside Shakespeare Theatre in Manhattan, among others. He has also very recently entered the British professional theatre this time as a playwright. In June of 1999 his one man show, *apology for the Life of an Actor* was given a special showcase at the Royal Shakespeare Company's experimental theatre, The Other Place. Both public and critics alike met the play with enthusiastic reception. Stephen Pimlott, Artistic Director of The Other Place, on whose invitation the play was produced in Stratford, described Dr. Pfeiffer's ability to bring the 18<sup>th</sup> century to life on the stage as, "Brilliant." Currently, several London producers, among whom is the Royal Shakespeare Company, for a West End run are considering the play. The play was also been invited to the famous Edinburgh Festival where it was acted by Dr. Pfeiffer. In Edinburgh, both the play and its author/actor met with enthusiastic praise by critics.

In 2007, Dr. Pfeiffer premiered at Salisbury University his new play – a rollicking adaptation of Henry Fielding's satiric novel, *Joseph Andrews*. This comedy was also received enthusiastically for its broad style and irreverent theatricality. More recently, his adaptation of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and of Ravenscroft's Restoration Comedy, *The London Cuckolds* has been produced at SU also garnering high praise for its lively wit and presentational style. Dr. Pfeiffer is currently seeking a professional production of this play. At present, he is completing a new and very different work – a drama based on Scotland's North Berwick witch trials of 1590, *The Sin That Kills*. Based entirely on primary sources, *The Sin That Kills* offers in historical drama contemporary social commentary of the American government's 'Culture of Fear.'

