

Meeting Peter Brook and Gregory Mosher

Voza Rivers: *Tierno Bokar* for me is a long journey. I happened to have met Peter Brook in Harlem almost twenty years ago when I was producing a play from South Africa at my theater on 125th Street. The name of that production was *Asinamali*. Peter flew in from Paris to meet the actors, and I was fir . . . and I was introduced to Peter. And I had this enormous respect based on his previous work and knowing who he was, and the idea that Peter would actually come to Harlem to see this very small production from South Africa was just an amazing opportunity.

That same production also gave me an opportunity to meet Greg Mosher. And Greg Mosher and I from that humble meeting decided that we wanted to work together, and going to Lincoln Center we then created something called the Woza African Festival where we brought in three productions from South Africa. That led to a long relationship with Lincoln Center, and also it kept me in the loop with Peter Brook in terms of the work that he was doing, because Peter eventually took that production that I did and did it in French and toured it throughout Europe. So there was this association with Peter Brook, Greg Mosher, and the work that I was doing from South Africa. Gregory arrives at Columbia University, and one of the first things that he did was reach out to me and just give me an idea of some of the things that he was thinking about. And Peter Brook's name came up twenty years later about this wonderful production that Peter had been produ . . . that was involved in *Tierno Bokar*. And I said, "My God, Gregory, isn't this like déjà vu? You know, twenty years ago we met in Harlem and here

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you are now in Harlem and now you're talking about Peter Brook, who I had met twenty years ago in Harlem?" And immediately I said, "How can I be helpful?" And we started discussing the possibilities of an association between the work that I was doing here in Harlem, what Columbia was doing, and then the connection with *Tierno Bokar*.