

## **Peter Brook and Africa**

**Gregory Mosher:** Peter Brook has had a longtime interest in Africa. When he in effect walked away from the West End and Broadway, and even the Royal Shakespeare Company in the sixties after having done these two landmark Shakespearean productions, *King Lear* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, he created an international theater company in Paris, and one of the first things that theater company did was to go to Africa and travel throughout Africa, and go to villages, unannounced, and often these villages had no word for *theater*. And they would, of course not having a language in common, try to create a theatrical event. And much of this had been captured on film and written about in a beautiful book by John Halpern. And sometimes the pieces would be hilariously funny, and sometimes they would be profoundly solemn, and they all came out of the energy that happened between the theatrical company, who was . . . which was made up of Europeans, a few Americans, Africans, Asians, and that was . . . Africa was a big part of Brook's search to go back and really find the roots of the theater. When does an act of theater begin? Well, certainly not with a red velvet curtain, or certainly not because you happen to be on Shaftesbury Avenue in London, or on West Forty-sixth Street in New York. Theater happens in a very personal and very direct connection between an actor and a person who's watching.