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Eleven and Twelve

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Co-production:
C.I.C.T. / Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, Paris
barbicanbite10, London
Grotowski Institute, Wroclaw

27/10/09

Eleven and Twelve

Adapted from **Amadou Hampaté Bâ**

by **Marie-Hélène Estienne** and **Peter Brook**

Directed by **Peter Brook**

Music by **Toshi Tsuchitori**

Light design **Philippe Vialatte**

Costumes **Hélène Patarot**

With **Makram J. Khoury**
Tunji Lucas
Jared McNeill
Khalifa Natour
Abdou Ouologuem
César Sarachu
Maximilien Seweryn

Company manager **Arthur Franc**

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Approximate running time: 1h40

About Eleven and Twelve

"Eleven and Twelve" is based on the novel *"Life and Teaching of Tierno Bokar - The Sage of Bandigara"* by the West-African writer **Amadou Hampate Ba** and is adapted into an English-language stage text by **Marie-Helene Estienne** together with **Peter Brook**

Peter Brook describes the central idea behind the project thus: "The theme vividly illuminates the question that concerns us all – the power of violence and the true nature of a tolerance that is more powerful still. For us to feel truly concerned theatre needs to be very close to our lives, but to capture our imagination its elements must always be fresh and unexpected. *Eleven and Twelve* unites these two conditions."

"Eleven and Twelve" tells the extraordinary true story of an African Sufi Master, Tierno Bokar, a humble and remarkable man who was the author's master. His story draws us deep into an Africa that is shaken by colonialism and torn apart by internal strife. Starting with a tiny disagreement over the meaning of the number 11 as opposed to the number 12, merciless conflicts arise that lead to massacres and to martyrdom. These tragic events create a chain that eventually links a small African village to the highest political decisions of the Second World War.

"How can a theological discussion around the hidden meaning of two numbers lead inexorably to a massacre? The story of Eleven and Twelve catches the breath of everyone who hears it. Especially as it is true. How can one grain of sand, one prayer-bead, block the administration of an entire African country?"

Amadou Hampaté Bâ, the great African writer, tells how his teacher in a small town in Mali, Tierno Bokar, is caught up in an epic struggle against hatred and violence within his own family, his clan, his people fomented by the colonial powers dominating his country.

This adaptation brings to the stage a unique narrative in which religion, politics, understanding and prejudice constantly intervene. It is tragic and mercilessly comic, full of sharp insights into the struggles of the past which resonate ever more strongly today."

Peter Brook

“For Christians and Moslems alike, God through his Prophets has given to mankind a clear and simple commandment: ‘Thou Shalt Not Kill’. Today we see that no rational thought, no intelligent debate, no social analysis has ever influenced nor can explain the endless current of hatred that pours through history.

The great African writer, Amadou Hampaté Bâ, born into traditional African village life and as a young man entering the French colonial administration, lived close to these agonising human realities and wrestled deeply with the questions they aroused. In his book ‘Tierno Bokar’ he draws on vivid experiences from his own life, opening up images of uncontrollable passion in family, social and political relationships. The deep question of religion and its place in everyday life is ever-present, not to draw moral conclusions but to live through its frightening contradictions. These are the themes that are developed in “Eleven and Twelve”.

“ 11 and 12 “ are two numbers which on a purely theological level have a deep hidden meaning. In the recent past, these abstract figures gradually took on flesh and blood, leading to feuds, violence and massacres.

“Eleven and Twelve” also shows the unshakeable conviction of two remarkable individuals Tierno Bokar and Cherif Hamallah. They both believe that tolerance is the most difficult and the most essential quality for a human being to develop. They stand firm despite every pressure and in the end sacrifice their lives in the name of a supreme tolerance that can encompass violence with an even greater power. In this way, the theme of Eleven and Twelve is not only irresistibly fascinating as a dramatic narrative, but closer than ever to our preoccupations today.

“Eleven and Twelve” is presented by a cast in which Israeli, Palestinian, African and European actors come together. Presented by the Barbican Centre, the Bouffes du Nord and the Grotowski Institute, it will open in Paris in November 2009.”

Peter Brook