

INTERVIEW: Preeti Vasudevan starts choreographic dialogues with her dance company



[September 3, 2021](#) [John Soltes](#) [0 Comments](#) [Lincoln Center](#), [Preeti Vasudevan](#)

Photo: Dancers with Preeti Vasudevan's Thresh recently performed at Lincoln Center. Photo courtesy of LC / Provided by official site.

Preeti Vasudevan's dance company, [known as Thresh](#), melds together Indian dance traditions with western contemporary forms, creating a wholly unique set of choreographies that have been enticing audience members for several years. Recently Vasudevan presented some her newest works at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts' Restart Stages celebration.

On the bill were excerpts from a forthcoming solo work called "Stories by Hand" and an opera-in-development called "L'Orient." Both are being developed as company debuts in the future.

Recently *Hollywood Soapbox* exchanged emails with Vasudevan about her Lincoln Center engagement and what the future holds for Thresh. Questions and answers have been slightly edited for style.

What was the motivation behind creating Thresh?

Thresh was created as an experimental platform to bring artists from different backgrounds to gather and make work together that dialogued on their identity, both cultural and individual. Thresh represents the Threshold where rules and information that we bring from our past are subverted and questioned before going forward into the future. It's a focus on the present times and the roles we play in the 'here and now.'

Is it tough to get the company's name out there in such a crowded art space?

Absolutely! Given that we are based out of New York City, one of the most demanding art cities in the world, it is very tough. However, we are also small and therefore nimble. We have evolved over the years to grow and sustain and establish ourselves through the gathering of a large collection of artists.

What can audience members expect from the solo work "Stories by Hand"?

"Stories by Hand" is a solo journey of a woman in the 21st century. It's autobiographical and allows the audience to experience the private life of the character. This is a collaboration between myself and Paul Kaiser, a wonderful multimedia artist and writer. We gathered my memories and then mapped them into a journey based on relationships. It was commissioned by a Live Feed residency at New York Live Arts in 2017. ...

Do you hope to make "L'Orient" a full dance opera at some point?

Yes, we are working on the development phase of "L'Orient" and hoping to find producers who can help us premiere it in the 2023 time frame. I feel it's a very important theme based on the expressions of women challenging the way they have been defined in the 19th century. It's also a relook at classical arts and the way the youth today view them.

Are you fascinated by the connections between Indian dance traditions and western contemporary forms? Is it easy to find "dialogue" between the two?

I am fascinated by the connections for sure. I grew up in India where these two worlds existed, and I had the freedom to swim between the two ways of experiencing culture and expression without judgement. I feel that if you know your artistic form pretty well and have really studied it, then the dialogue is a deep one and can be fruitful in discovering the path to a new way of expression. Historically there has been so much dialogue between the east and west — we often forget that. It is important to know that through time, cultural exchange and re-envisioning of one's own way of experiencing things has always been very vibrant. I am simply doing the same during our times.

What's the future hold beyond this recent performance at Lincoln Center?

More performances! We are looking to see how we can take our works back on the road and continue developing our new creative productions. We wish to get a diverse group of people interested in what we are creating and to join us on our journey in different ways and help us realise our mission. Our social impact and outreach work is also a very important aspect of Thresh's mission using storytelling as a tool to reach underserved youth in Native American reservations and in partnerships with worldwide organizations to bring art making as a powerful enabler to build leadership amongst young people and their connections to their own ancestry and contemporary lives.

*By John Soltes / Publisher / John@HollywoodSoapbox.com
Preeti Vasudevan is the founder and artistic director of Thresh. Click [here](#) for more information.*