

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 8, 2023

Interview and Images Available Upon Request

Media Contact: Motley Crew Media for the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts
Nicole Shiro | 512.740.6665 | nicole.shiro@motleycrewmedia.com
Amy S. Layton | 512.695.0799 | amy.layton@motleycrewmedia.com

**THE HOBBY CENTER PRESENTS THE WORLD PREMIERE OF
KEEPSAKE BY ISHIDA DANCE COMPANY
HOUSTON JANUARY 2024**

TICKETS ON SALE NOVEMBER 10 AT 10AM

WHO: The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts
WHAT: World Premiere of *keepsake* by ISHIDA Dance
WHEN: January 12–13, 2024
Fri – Sat at 7:30 pm
WHERE: The Hobby Center | Zilkha Hall | 800 Bagby Street | Houston, TX 77002
TICKETS: Start at \$38. Available online at www.TheHobbyCenter.org and in person at the Hobby Center Box Office (800 Bagby, Houston, TX 77002).

Houston, TX – The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts presents the world premiere of *keepsake* in collaboration with **ISHIDA Dance Company** (ISHIDA) featuring works choreographed by **ISHIDA**, French choreographer **Jeremy Galdeano** commissioned by Les Grands Ballets and Mannheim National Theater, and Swedish dancer and choreographer **John Wannehag** formerly with tanzmainz. *Keepsake* will play Houston **January 12-13, 2024** at The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. Tickets go on sale November 10 at 10AM at thehobbycenter.org.

Featuring venerated dancers from companies such as Houston Ballet, The English National Ballet and Netherlands Dance Theater, to name a few, ISHIDA blends contemporary dance with theatrical elements while retaining the physicality and beauty of the human form from traditional ballet.

“As part of our new mission to serve as a connector, convenor and incubator, the Hobby Center is excited to present local artists that contribute to our city’s cultural fabric and inspire audiences with their creativity and brilliance. ISHIDA Dance Company is one of Houston’s performing arts treasures and we are thrilled to connect audiences to their captivating work,” said **Deborah Lugo**, Vice President of Programming and Education. “By lifting up these artists and their craft, we endeavor to inspire audiences, bringing them new artistic experiences while strengthening our overall arts ecosystem.”

The only company named in *Dance Magazine’s* “25 to watch” for 2023, ISHIDA’s program includes the world premiere of an original **ISHIDA** poetic narrative titled *keepsake* which explores a dissociative fugue state and what might have provoked it. The program also features works by two respected but rarely seen in the US, European choreographers: the critically acclaimed work “*If the world was ending, would you hold me tight?*” by Swedish choreographer **John Wannehag** and a world premiere by highly sought-after French choreographer Jeremy Galdeano whose work has been presented in Canada,

Germany, Italy and Mexico. The evening promises to be a unique opportunity to see some of the best and most interesting choreography from Europe, Canada, and the US.

“Wannehag’s work is high energy, edgy and yet relatable,” said ISHIDA Artistic Director **Brett Ishida**. “Galdeano’s work exhibits an idiosyncratic choreographic language which fits beautifully in this program. Galdeano is a former colleague of mine from Les Grands Ballets in Montreal, whose work has been receiving critical acclaim in Canada and Germany, so this was a great opportunity to present a new creation here in Texas.”

World Premiere of *keepsake* | HOUSTON, TX

January 12-13, 2024 | Friday – Saturday at 7:30 pm

The Hobby Center | Zilkha Hall | 800 Bagby Street | Houston, TX 77002

Tickets: \$38-\$104/VIP \$120.50 | Tickets available at thehobbycenter.org

Tickets start at \$38. VIP tickets are available at \$120.50 for the Friday, January 12 performance and includes a post-show reception on stage with dancers and choreographers. Tickets on sale beginning Friday, November 10 at 10AM, available online at www.TheHobbyCenter.org and in person at the Hobby Center Box Office (800 Bagby, Houston, TX 77002).

Patrons can become a “Hobby Center Insider” by signing up at thehobbycenter.org/news/stay-connected where they receive perks such as access to purchase tickets before public on sale.

About Brett Ishida – ISHIDA Artistic Director

Brett Ishida is Japanese American and grew up on a citrus farm in California’s Central Valley. Brett’s love for dance inspired her to move away from home at age fifteen when she received a full scholarship to the Kirov Academy and later to the School of American Ballet in NYC. She then danced with Boston Ballet, Oregon Ballet Theatre, where she first choreographed on the company, and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens in Montréal where she toured around the world. At Les Grands Ballets, she collaborated in new creations with choreographers and performed principal and soloist roles in repertoire by Nacho Duato, George Balanchine, William Forsythe, Jirí Kylián, Didi Veldman and Ohad Naharin, among others.

She later graduated from UCLA earning a BA in Literature with emphasis in Creative Writing (Poetry), and MA in Montessori Education from St. Mary’s. She felt by combining those two worlds from her past, she could be a new voice in contemporary dance and started ISHIDA in 2019.

Already a sought-out choreographer for her work, Ishida was commissioned by venerated ballerina and Artistic Director of The Washington Ballet now Co-Artistic Director of Houston Ballet, Julie Kent, to create a ballet for their NEXTsteps program held in June 2022 and was performed again in November 2022 at The Kennedy Center. Pulitzer-prize winning dance critic Sarah L. Kaufman from *The Washington Post* deemed Ishida’s piece *homecoming* which “tackled a deeply poignant, poetic theme” to be “remarkable.”

Brett Ishida’s work intertwines reflections of ancient timeless themes of Greek philosophy and poetry with subconscious memories which shape who we are and where we are going. Her company, ISHIDA, creates 'memory houses' for audiences where themes and characters build relationships and familiarity in imitation of life’s enigma.

About Guest Choreographer and Dancer – John Wannehag

Born on a pig farm in Sweden, John comes from a rigorous sports background in skiing, track & field and mountain biking. It wasn't until his teenage years John found his passion for dance. After graduating at Lunds School of Performing Arts, John moved to Leeds, England, to further train as a dancer at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance where he graduated with first-class honors. A year later he completed his MA in performance practice where he focused on the relationship between film music and film.

In 2014, John's film *Young Angry Men* won the first edition of the student category at Cinedans - dance on screen festival (NL), marking the beginning of his filmmaking. In 2020, John was commissioned by Cathy Levy for National Art Centre Canada to create a film portrait. John's choreographic achievements include being a finalist in the Rotterdam International Duet Choreographic Competition, Hannover Choreographic competition, and winning the SOLOCOREOGRAFICO 2019 Turin Edition.

John has danced with tanzmainz (Staatstheater Mainz) DE, Skånes Dansteater (SWE), ForWorks, and Van Huynh Dance Company. He has performed in original works by Sharon Eyal (LEV), Koen Augustijnen & Rosalba Torres Guerrero, Guy Weizman & Roni Haver, Roy Assaf, Guy Nader & Maria Campos, Marcos Morrau, Martin Forsberg, Victor Quijada, and Maxine Doyle. In August 2022 and January 2023, he performed in original ISHIDA creations and premiered "*If the world was ending would you hold me tight?*" which was well received by Houston audiences and reviewers.

About Guest Choreographer – Jeremy Galdeano

Born in Nimes, France, he graduated from the School of Dance in Marseille, and he danced with the Ballet National de Marseille before joining Les Grands Ballets Canadiens in 2001, where he stayed for 19 years and became First Soloist. His repertoire includes Mats Ek, Jiri Kylian, Ohad Naharin, Didy Veldman, Christian Spuck, Jean Christophe Maillot, Shen Wei, Stephan Thoss, Nacho Duato, Stijn Celis, Anabelle Lopez Ochoa, Edward Clug, and many others.

His choreography has been performed in Montreal, Germany, Italy and Mexico. Jérémy is also part of a choreographic duo with Vera Kvarkacova which has received critical acclaim in Montreal and Europe, and the only non-German choreographers selected for the prestigious Noverre-Young choreographers evening with Stuttgart Ballet. In 2021 they were invited to perform *Doma* at the Joyce Theater in New York as part of The Martha Graham Company season and with ISHIDA in August 2022. *Doma*, the short film version, has been awarded as Winner Best Dance video at Rio WebFest 2019 and Gold Winner as Best Short dance at Queen Palm International Film Festival 2020. ZABA, the short dance film they created during lockdown in 2020 was in the final selection of Interfaccia Digitale Festival. Jeremy has created several works for Les Grands Ballets and National Theater Mannheim Germany. In June 2021, FOMO was presented at Festival Quartiers Danses in Montreal and was awarded the best show in the festival. In March 2024, Jeremy returns to Les Grands Ballets Canadiens to create a new work on the company.

ISHIDA Dance Company is a new world-class contemporary dance company based in Austin and Houston, Texas and the only company in the US to be nationally recognized in Dance Magazine's prestigious "25 to watch" list for 2023. ISHIDA features venerated dancers from many of the top companies in the world (Houston Ballet, Boston Ballet, The Joffrey Ballet, English National Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Ballet BC, Netherlands Dance Theater, GöteborgsOperan, tanzmainz, Les Ballets Jazz Montreal, Royal Ballet Flanders, Marie Chouinard, Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch). ISHIDA blends contemporary dance with theatrical elements while retaining the physicality and beauty of the human form from traditional ballet. ISHIDA presents unique poetic narratives relevant to a modern audience that invite existential questions. The work explores archetypal patterns and themes of our psyche such as betrayal, belonging, love and loss, to encourage a tender kindness towards ourselves that extends to others. For more information on ISHIDA please visit ishidance.org.

The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts serves as a connector, convenor and incubator for all Houston audiences, artmakers and arts organizations. Opened in 2002, the campus houses two theaters including the 2,650-seat Sarofim Hall and the 500-seat Zilkha Hall. Delivering a best-in-class patron experience, the Hobby Center welcomes over 400,000 audience members annually to engage with high-quality arts programming including the Memorial Hermann Broadway at the Hobby Center series. The Hobby Center is also home to a full season of musical theatre produced by Principal Resident Company

Theatre Under the Stars, as well as a variety of diverse performances from both Houston-based and touring artists and companies. Education and accessibility initiatives are central to the Hobby Center's impact in Houston through programs like the ExxonMobil Discovery Series that welcomes thousands of students to performances every season. Please visit TheHobbyCenter.org. Follow the Hobby Center on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

###

If you would like to unsubscribe, please reply to this [email](#) with the word "unsubscribe" in the subject line.