



WADDESDON  
Rothschild Collections



## *The Teapot Prince*

**Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire – 16 & 17 June 2022**

**Royal Pavilion, Brighton – 19–21 June 2022**

**A contemporary reimagining of the lost 18<sup>th</sup>-century French *Ballet des Porcelaines*—*The Teapot Prince*—will be performed at Waddesdon Manor and the Royal Pavilion this summer, bringing to life a story of magic, desire and exotic entanglement.**

Created by Meredith Martin, professor of art history at New York University, and Phil Chan, choreographer and co-founder of [Final Bow for Yellowface](#), *The Teapot Prince* is based on an Orientalist fairy tale about a sorcerer who lives on a 'Blue Island' and transforms anyone who dares to trespass into porcelain cups, vases and other wares. When the sorcerer turns the eponymous prince into a teapot, his lover, the princess comes to his rescue by stealing the sorcerer's wand and turning him into a pagod (a Chinese figurine with a nodding head). With the spell broken, teacups, bowls and vases are transmogrified back into human form and the celebrations can begin.

Written by the extravagantly named and titled Anne Claude de Tubières-Grimoard de Pestels de Lévis, comte de Caylus, marquis d'Esternay, baron de Bransac (1692–1765), a French antiquarian, proto-archaeologist and man of letters, the *Ballet des Porcelaines* was first staged in 1739 at a château on the outskirts of Paris and is contemporaneous with the similarly themed story of *Beauty and the Beast* (1740). Although it was rarely, if ever, performed after 1741, the ballet influenced later, more famous works such as *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*.

The original *Ballet des Porcelaines* can be seen as an allegory for the aggressive European desire to know and steal the secrets of Chinese porcelain manufacture. In the new version, the narrative is flipped. The main protagonists are now Chinese, and the Sorcerer is a mad European porcelain collector, modelled on Augustus II the Strong (1670-1733), King of Poland, elector of Saxony and founder of Meissen, the first European manufactory to succeed in making true porcelain.

With the fairy-tale backdrop of Waddesdon Manor, a French Renaissance-style château in rural Buckinghamshire, *The Teapot Prince* will be performed in the beautiful setting of the Parterre—a French-inspired formal garden.

Waddesdon was selected as one of the host venues for the trans-American and European tour of *The Teapot Prince* due to its famous collection, which includes masterpieces created by the royal French porcelain manufactory of Sèvres, echoing Martin and Chan's desire to stage the ballet in museum galleries, gardens, historic houses, and university theatres that are in close proximity to world-renowned porcelain collections and historic manufactories—and in so doing, linking the 18<sup>th</sup>-century fairy tale to the present day.

Brighton's Royal Pavilion was created as the seaside retreat of the Prince Regent later George IV. It is a unique fantasy palace, its outside in the Indian Moghul style its interior is predominantly Chinese in design and includes some of the most sumptuous Chinoiserie creations of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most grand of all is the Music Room with its painted walls dominated by pagodas and dragons and its grand chandeliers and painted glass skylights. A perfect location for the staging of *The Teapot Prince* where the room itself will provide the most perfect of stage sets.

Choreographed by Phil Chan, the production features Georgina Pazcoguin (New York City Ballet's first female Asian-American soloist) and her colleague, Daniel Applebaum (NYCB soloist), who will dance the lead roles of the Princess and Prince. Tyler Hanes (Broadway actor, singer, dancer, choreographer) will play the Sorcerer.

To accompany the dancers, a specially created baroque-contemporary musical score (by the ballet's original composer, Nicolas Racot de Grandval (1676-1753), and the contemporary composer [Sugar Vendil](#)) will be performed live and features the sounds of porcelain clinking and shattering.

For the Waddesdon performance, there will also be a series of associated events, including baroque movement and rococo porcelain for children, and an afternoon of conversations between academics and creatives at Oxford.

For the six Brighton performances the Music Room will be turned once again into a performance space and will include one special gala performance. The performances will be accompanied by talks and discussions that help make the link between the ballet, the enlightenment obsession with Chinese decorative arts and how this can be seen manifest in the Royal Pavilion.

Meredith Martin and Phil Chan said *"We are delighted that The Teapot Prince will have its European debut at Waddesdon and in Brighton this summer – a pair of locations that have close ties to world-renowned porcelain collections and historic manufactories. We have aimed in our production to honour the ballet's legacy while reimagining it for the multiracial society we find ourselves in. We really hope UK audiences enjoy what we have created."*

Mia Jackson, Curator of Decorative Arts at Waddesdon says: *"The Teapot Prince coming to Waddesdon launches an exciting European Tour, and links it with its first performances at a French Château. This particular château is full of porcelain and so provides the perfect setting for this smash hit."*

Hedley Swain, Chief Executive of Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust said *"We are completely delighted to be bringing The Teapot Prince to Brighton and the Royal Pavilion. The Music Room provides a perfect setting, and this is part of a process whereby we want once again see the Royal Pavilion to be at the centre of Brighton creativity where the very best artists from around the world can be seen in this unique venue."*

Following the performances at Waddesdon Manor and the Royal Pavilion, the show will transfer to Italy with the tour culminating in Paris, at the Sèvres Museum.

Tickets for *The Teapot Prince* will be available online soon – for the Waddesdon performances, visit [www.waddesdon.org.uk](http://www.waddesdon.org.uk) and for the Brighton Pavilion performances, visit [www.brightonmuseums.org.uk/royalpavilion](http://www.brightonmuseums.org.uk/royalpavilion)

The Waddesdon performance and mini colloquium in Oxford are made possible with support from The Oxford Research Centre for the Humanities, the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies and The Rothschild Foundation.

### **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

**Waddesdon Manor** was built at the end of the 19th century by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild in the style of a French early 16th-century château. Baron Ferdinand was an inspired collector and the house was designed to showcase his exceptional collection of French 18th-century furniture, Sèvres porcelain, English portraits and other decorative arts. When Ferdinand died in 1898, he left Waddesdon to his sister, Alice. Upon her death the house passed to her great-nephew, James de Rothschild, who inherited a substantial part of his father Baron Edmond's great collection. In 1957, in order to ensure its future in perpetuity, Waddesdon was bequeathed to the National Trust. The Rothschild family continues to run Waddesdon through a family charitable trust under the chairmanship of Lord Rothschild. More at <https://waddesdon.org.uk/about-us/press/notes-for-editors/> For more information on Waddesdon Manor and its exhibitions, visit [www.waddesdon.org.uk](http://www.waddesdon.org.uk), like @WaddesdonManor on Facebook, follow @WaddesdonManor on Twitter and @waddesdonmanor\_nt on Instagram.

### **About the Royal Pavilion**

Part of Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust, the Royal Pavilion in the centre of Brighton is an exotic palace with a colourful history. Built as a seaside pleasure palace for King George IV, this historic house mixes Regency grandeur with the lavish visual styles of India and China. Admission fee payable. Brighton BN1 1EE Tel 03000 290900. Open daily Apr-Sep 9.30am-5.45pm (last admission 5pm) Oct-Mar 10am-5.15pm (last admission 4.30pm)

**The Rothschild Foundation** is a charity that supports arts and heritage, the environment and social welfare by awarding grants, fostering dialogue and debate, and through our support of Waddesdon Manor. Lord Rothschild is Chair of the Rothschild Foundation and has been involved extensively in public service and philanthropic support of the arts throughout his lifetime. Established in 2010, the Rothschild Foundation allocates £10 million in grant making annually. This sum is shared between the preservation of Waddesdon Manor where the Foundation is based, and grants for wider public benefit. The Foundation's grant-making within Buckinghamshire supports communities around Waddesdon through investment in the local third sector. Beyond Buckinghamshire, the Foundation supports major initiatives which encourage enjoyment of the UK's rich cultural heritage. Grants to the British Museum to create a new gallery for the Waddesdon Bequest and to the Royal Academy for a lecture theatre and annual Rothschild Foundation lecture are typical of the Foundation's landmark investments. More at <https://rothschildfoundation.org.uk/press-and-media/>

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### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Please contact Tracy Jones at Brera PR - [tracy@brera-london.com](mailto:tracy@brera-london.com) / 01702 216658 / 07887 514984 / [www.brera-frpicelondon.com](http://www.brera-frpicelondon.com)