IL SOGNO DI SCIPIONE

CLASSICAL OPERA

IAN PAGE (CONDUCTOR)
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)
IL SOGNO DI SCIPIONE, K.126

Libretto by Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782)

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THE CHOIR OF CLASSICAL OPERA

THE ORCHESTRA OF CLASSICAL OPERA
Leader: Daniel Edgar
Continuo: Christopher Bucknall (harpsichord), Luise Buchberger (cello), Cecelia Bruggemeyer (double bass)

IAN PAGE conductor

Performance material: New Mozart Edition (NMA)
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Produced and engineered by Andrew Mellor
Assistant engineers: Robin Hawkins and Chris Kalcov
Editing: Claire Hay and Andrew Mellor
Mix & Mastering: Andrew Mellor
Design by Toucari Live and Classical Opera
Cover image by Debbie Coates
Photographs by Benjamin Ealovega

Italian language coach: Matteo Dalle Fratte
Harpsichord technician: Malcolm Greenhalgh

Orchestra playing on period instruments at A = 430 Hz

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IL SOGNO DI SCIPIONE, K.126

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MOZART / IL SOGNO DI SCIPIONE
The Orchestra of Classical Opera

Violin 1
Daniel Edgar (leader)
Hannah Tibell
Julia Kuhn
Nia Lewis
James Toll
Kristin Deeken
Davina Clarke

Violin 2
Liz McCarthy
Sophie Barber
Mariana Szücs
Kirsten Klingels
Emilia Benjamin
Naomi Burrell
Mark Seow

Viola
Lisa Cochrane
Oliver Wilson
Mark Braithwaite
Louise Hogan

Cello
Luise Buchberger (continuo)
Jonathan Rees
Alex Rolton

Double bass
Cecilia Bruggemeyer (continuo)
Timothy Amherst

Flute
Katy Bircher
Eva Caballero

Oboe
James Eastaway
Rachel Chaplin

Bassoon
Zoe Shevlin
Inga Maria Klaue

Horn
Gavin Edwards
Nick Benz

Trumpet
Paul Sharp
Philip Bainbridge

Timpani
Scott Bywater

Harpsichord
Christopher Bucknall (continuo)
The Choir of Classical Opera

**Soprano**
Sophie Gallagher
Rosemary Galton
Laura Oldfield
Bethany Partridge
Amy Wood

**Alto**
Amy Lyddon
Martha McLorinan
Eleanor Minney

**Tenor**
Benjamin Alden
Peter Davoren
Nicholas Madden

**Bass**
Stephen Kennedy
Oliver Hunt
Andrew Mahon
Il sogno di Scipione – an introduction by Ian Page

Mozart’s Il sogno di Scipione was composed in 1771 as a celebratory homage to Prince Archbishop Sigismund Schrattenbach of Salzburg, but the Archbishop died before the piece could be performed. In the spring of 1772 Mozart amended the work so that it could be used in honour of Schrattenbach’s successor, Hieronymus Colloredo – the only necessary change was to alter the name of the dedicatee in the final recitative, although Mozart also took the opportunity to compose a new, extended setting of the final aria. It seems likely that the piece was eventually presented as part of the celebrations for Archbishop Colloredo’s investiture, but there is no categorical proof that it was performed either then or at any other point in Mozart’s lifetime. Indeed, it is possible that its première might have been as recently as 20 January 1979, when it was performed as part of the Salzburg Mozartwoche.

Background
Following the triumphant première of Mitridate, re di Ponto in Milan on 26 December 1770, the fourteen-year-old Mozart and his father had remained in Italy for a further three months, incorporating a two-week visit to Turin and a month in Venice, as well as short stays in Brescia, Verona, Vicenza and Padua. By the time they left the country Leopold Mozart had secured four further commissions for his son. Two of these were for Milan again – a wedding ‘serenata’ (which would be Ascanio in Alba) for the festivities surrounding the marriage of the Habsburg Empress Maria Theresa’s fourth son, Archduke Ferdinand, to Beatrice d’Este, Princess of Modena, and another carnival opera (Lucio Silla) to open in December 1772 – while the third was for an opera for Venice, which in the event did not materialise because its dates clashed directly with the second Milan commission. The final contract was for an oratorio for Padua (this became La Betulia liberata, although no performance was forthcoming).
Mozart and his father arrived back home in Salzburg on Maundy Thursday, 28 March 1771, and Wolfgang was soon working on a fifth commission, this one for his home town. This was to be a serenata in honour of Archbishop Schrattenbach, and the resulting work was Il sogno di Scipione. No record or details of the commission survive, and the occasion for which the work was intended is not precisely clear. Each year the court celebrated the anniversary of the Archbishop’s consecration on 21 December and his birthday on 28 February, but the most likely pretext for the commission was the fiftieth anniversary of Schrattenbach’s ordination into the church, which would have occurred on 10 January 1772.

The licenza (literally ‘licence’ or ‘liberty’) was a regular part of courtly life in the eighteenth century, and Mozart had already composed two licenza arias for Archbishop Schrattenbach: “Or che il dover… Tali e cotante sono”, K.36 in December 1766 and “A Berenice e Volageso spasio… Sol nascente in questa gioia”, K.70 in either 1767 or 1769. A licenza was a tribute inserted at the end of an opera, play or other entertainment to honour the anniversary of a patron’s birth, wedding or investiture. Often they were conceived as a separate but climactic homage, but occasionally they formed an integral part of the work they followed, as in Il sogno di Scipione. They usually consisted of a solo recitative and aria, sometimes followed by a celebratory chorus.

The libretto
During Mozart’s time in Italy he had been befriended and supported by the governor-general of Lombardy, Count Karl Joseph Firmian, whose brother was high steward at the Salzburg court. Firmian, who was described by Charles Burney as “a sort of King of Milan”, had been responsible for securing the commission for Mitridate. Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782) was the most celebrated and prolific opera librettist of the day – the theorist Stefano Arteaga described him as “the favourite author of the century, whose name is heard gloriously from Cadiz to the Ukraine, and from Copenhagen to Brazil” – and it was to his work that Mozart turned when he arrived home in Salzburg in March 1771. He had already composed several concert arias to Metastasio texts (K.77, 78, 79, 82, 83, 88), and for his new Salzburg commission he chose (doubtless in collaboration with his father) Metastasio’s Il sogno di Scipione, which had been penned in 1735 for the birthday celebrations of Habsburg Emperor Karl VI (it was originally set by the Bolognese composer Luca Antonio Predieri).

Metastasio’s prime source was Cicero’s Somnium Scipionis (“Scipio’s Dream”), from Book VI of his De Republica, although he also drew on a story told in Book XV of Silius Italicus’ Punica, in which Scipio is forced to decide whether his life should be governed by Virtus (Virtue) or Voluptas (Pleasure). The Scipio of the title is the Roman general Scipio Aemilianus (also known as Scipio Africanus the Younger), who was the second son of the Roman consul and general Lucius Aemilius Paulus Macedonicus (Emilio in the opera). Scipio had been adopted in childhood by his cousin, Publius Cornelius Scipio, whose own father, Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus, was the celebrated military commander who had defeated Hannibal in the Second Punic War; there appears to be some uncertainty among biographers and commentators as to which of these Publiuses is featured in Il sogno di Scipione, but the dramatis personae of Metastasio’s libretto makes clear that it was Scipio’s adoptive grandfather, Scipio Africanus. The fictional story of Scipio’s dream takes place in 148 BC, two years before Scipio led the destruction of Carthage in the Third Punic War.

Composition and re-dedication
Mozart very probably composed il sogno di Scipione during April and May 1771, followed by a second Metastasio setting, La Betulia liberata (in response to his Padua commission), while he was still awaiting confirmation of which libretto he was required to write.
to set for the Milan wedding serenade. He presumably knew that time would be extremely tight when he returned from Milan, and that he therefore needed to complete the Schrattenbach commission before he left. In the event he and his father departed for their second trip to Italy on 13 August, arriving in Milan on 21 August. Here he began composing Ascanio in Alba, and by 21 September he reported that he only had two more arias to compose. The work was premiered on 17 October, like Mitridate at the Teatro Regio Ducale, and received four further performances before the end of the month as the wedding festivities continued unabated. Leopold Mozart decided that they should stay in Milan for a further month in the hope of securing a musical position for Wolfgang in the court of the newly married Archduke Ferdinand, but no offer was forthcoming. They eventually left Milan on 5 December, arriving back in Salzburg on 15 December. The very next day, any plans for the imminent performance of Il sogno di Scipione were suddenly thrown into confusion by the death of Archbishop Schrattenbach.

The selection of a successor was a tortuous and controversial one, with the Imperial court in Vienna applying political pressure on the election process, and in the end – and after no fewer than thirteen ballots – the appointment went to Hieronymus Joseph Franz de Paula, the Count of Colloredo. He had been born into a distinguished aristocratic family in Vienna in 1732, and was educated there and in Rome. He had been made a canon at Salzburg Cathedral at the age of fifteen, and had acquired several further ecclesiastical titles in Austria and Germany by the time he was officially appointed Prince Archbishop of Salzburg on 14 March 1772.

It was a straightforward and politic move to re-dedicate Il sogno di Scipione to the new Archbishop – Mozart had already changed Metastasio’s original dedicatory reference in the final recitative from ‘Carlo’ (Karl VII) to ‘Sisimondo’ (Schrattenbach), and in the autograph manuscript he subsequently crossed out ‘Sisimondo’ and replaced it with ‘Girolamo’, the Italian equivalent of Hieronymus (Colloredo). In the spring of 1772 he also wrote a new version of the final licenza aria – the original setting (included as an appendix on this recording) was considerably shorter than all but one of the work’s other arias, possibly as a result of the work having been completed in a hurry – and this was not a task that he would have undertaken without the expectation of a performance.

Colloredo inherited extensive debts from his predecessor, and his rule was to be characterised by austerity and thrift. Some biographers have taken this, in combination with the lack of firm evidence, to suggest that any planned performance of Il sogno di Scipione in 1772 failed to materialise, but written reports of the celebrations attached to the Archbishop’s investiture on 29 April 1772 – the date that he took up residence in Salzburg – refer to the performance of a cantata at a grand dinner for 160 held in the Residenz palace that evening. It is entirely plausible – likely, even – that the work in question was Il sogno di Scipione.

Mozart’s relationship with the new Archbishop was to prove a difficult and ultimately acrimonious one, but it began promisingly. Colloredo had met the six-year-old Mozart in Vienna in 1762 and heard him perform there, and ten years later one of his first acts as Archbishop was to incorporate Wolfgang formally into court employment, granting him a salary for the first time (his 150 gulden a year was one-third the size of his father’s salary). Again, it seems plausible, though unproven, that this recognition might have been prompted by gratitude for the serenata offered in his honour.

The music

In Mozart’s early operas he already demonstrates an unerring ability to match the scale and ambition of the music to the widely differing circumstances for which each work was written. Apollo et Hyacinthus, La finta semplice, Bastien und Bastienne and Mitridate, re di Ponto were all conceived for highly contrasting conditions, venues, audiences and performers, and it is important to bear this in mind when assessing their relative merits. If
sogno di Scipione represented yet another new set of circumstances: an extremely formal and obsequious presentation designed as a homage to the Archbishop of Salzburg.

At face value Metastasio’s libretto presented a significant challenge. It is almost entirely devoid of plot, character development or dramatic action of any kind, and the sequence of prototype ‘opera seria’ arias and recitatives is broken only by two short choruses, the second of which concludes the work. Mozart’s score, therefore, needed to create its own musical flow and momentum, and to enhance the contemplative nature of much of the libretto with music of virtuosity, vigour and panache. The influence of his recent fifteen-month trip to Italy is readily apparent, but whereas Mitridate had been able to draw on the operatic reforms and experiments of composers such as Gluck, Jommelli and Traetta, Il sogno di Scipione needed to revert to a less fluid, altogether more reflective and static pace of utterance.

Aside from the linking recitative, the main body of the story features nine arias (two for each character except Emilio, who has one) and a chorus. Scipio’s lyrical opening aria reveals a character who is benignly bemused by Fortune and Constancy’s insistence that he must commit to following one of them and rejecting the other, and any sense of confusion or unease inherent in Metastasio’s text is reserved for the palpitating middle section, in which the orchestra’s pizzicato bass line and fluttering off-beat accents underpin the briefly animated vocal part. By the time of his second aria, however, Scipio has already resolved to choose Constancy, and the music now assumes a majesty and virtuosity which elevates the character to the heroic status of his ancestors.

The allegorical figures of Costanza and Fortuna are characterised more as sparring sisters than as polar opposites, and their arias similarly combine lyrical warmth with virtuosic vivacity. Mozart seems to devote more attention to distinguishing between Scipio’s two forefathers, the aria of his natural father Emilio possessing a radiance and compassion lacking in the music of his adoptive grandfather Publio. Perhaps the finest aria of all, though, is the final version of the concluding licenza aria, whose melodic charm and yearning pathos anticipate the wonders of Mozart’s maturity.

Mozart’s writing for the orchestra is consistently accomplished and vibrant. In Fortuna’s first aria, and again in Costanza’s second aria, a relentlessly scurrying undertow of second violin semiquavers depicts the tempestuous weather conditions that are being evoked, while in Publio’s first aria high-lying B flat alto horns bring a distinctive brightness, simultaneously ethereal and military, to the music. As in his other early operas, Mozart frequently enriches the string texture by writing two separate viola parts, and another recurring device he uses to great effect is to have first and second violins doubling a melodic line an octave apart. He underlines the work’s festive provenance by adding trumpets and timpani to the standard orchestration of oboes, horns, bassoon and strings for the opening movement of the overture and for both choruses, and the addition of flutes for the second movement of the overture and for Emilio’s aria creates an exquisitely autumnal hue which is all the more effective for being so sparingly used.

In a piece that has so little plot and narrative content, though, it is arguably the two framing devices which he uses to set the story up that reveal Mozart’s dramatic genius most tellingly, firstly when the overture gradually subsides into an unresolved hush which depicts Scipio falling into a deep sleep, and secondly with the remarkable accompanied recitative in which Scipio eventually stirs from his dream. After much music that fulfils its function effectively and attractively without quite firing the depths of Mozart’s nascent imagination, here at last we encounter music whose sublime beauty and haunting otherworldliness is suddenly worthy and evocative of Pythagoras’ imagined ‘music of the spheres’.

Ian Page
Synopsis

The story of Scipio's Dream takes place in c.148 BC, while the celebrated Roman general is a guest in the palace of his ally Massinissa, King of Numidia (in modern day Tunisia). As Scipio falls into a deep sleep, he dreams that the allegorical figures of Fortuna (Fortune) and Costanza (Constancy) appear to him in Elysium and demand that he should choose one of them to follow for the rest of his days. Scipio feels that he needs more information to be able to make his decision, but Fortuna in particular is reluctant to allow him further time, acknowledging that she is as changeable and capricious as the wind. As Scipio admires the astonishing beauty of his surroundings, Costanza explains to him that on earth we are incapable of recognising such wonders, in the same way that we have to turn away when we try to look into the sun.

Scipio enquires about the inhabitants of Elysium, and is immediately visited by a chorus of dead heroes who include among their number his father Emilio (Lucius Aemilius) and his adoptive grandfather Publio (Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus), both of whom have died heroically in military combat while serving their country. Publio explains that only their mortal bodies are dead, and he urges Scipio to live a life of virtue so that he in time can also live among the immortal heroes.

Scipio is perturbed that his father Emilio does not seem happy to see him, but Emilio explains that in heaven happiness is a much calmer and less demonstrative emotion. From their vantage point the world appears like a tiny dot, and all the anxieties and agitations that we endure on earth now seem absurd and insignificant.

Scipio wishes to remain in Elysium, but Fortuna and Costanza insist that this is not yet permitted. Publio and Emilio remind him that he still has plenty to accomplish on earth for the good of his people, and that he has not yet fulfilled his destiny and earned his place in heaven.

The time has come for Scipio to choose between Fortuna and Costanza, but when he turns to Publio and Emilio for advice they tell him that he must make up his own mind. One after the other Fortuna and Costanza press their claims for support, Fortuna asserting that every human life is at her mercy while Costanza claims that she alone is capable of withstanding Fortuna and rewarding virtue and merit.

Scipio finally makes his decision. He will ignore the threats and vicissitudes of Fortuna and devote himself to Costanza. Fortuna is livid and unleashes her fury, but Scipio remains steadfast and fearless. He wakes up to realise that everything has been a dream, but he recognises the omen and resolves to commit his allegiance to constancy rather than fortune, as he has done in his dream.

In the closing licenza, the muse declares that this was not so much a story about Scipio as about Archbishop Colloredo. She sings his praises and a final chorus pays homage to him, wishing him long life and prosperity.
Classical Opera

Classical Opera was founded in 1997 by conductor Ian Page to explore the works of Mozart and his contemporaries, and has emerged as one of the leading exponents in its field. In 2017 it launched a new brand, The Mozartists, enabling it to broaden its ever-expanding concert work while continuing to present recordings and performances of complete operas under the name of Classical Opera. With its own acclaimed period-instrument orchestra, the company has attracted widespread critical and public recognition, not only for the high quality of its performances but also for its imaginative programming and its ability to discover and nurture outstanding young singers. In 2015 it launched MOZART 250, a ground-breaking 27-year project following the chronological trajectory of Mozart’s life, works and influences.

Classical Opera has performed regularly at many of London and the UK’s leading venues, including Wigmore Hall, the Barbican, Sadler’s Wells, Birmingham Town Hall and Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, and on tour in Italy, France, Germany and Austria, where it enjoyed a three-concert residency at the 2016 Eisenstadt Haydn Festival. It has mounted staged productions of many of Mozart’s operas, and in 2009 presented The Royal Opera’s new production of Thomas Arne’s Artaxerxes. It has also given the world première of the ‘original’ version of Mozart’s Mitridate, re di Ponto, and the UK premières of Gluck’s La clemenza di Tito, Telemann’s Orpheus and Jommelli’s Il Vologeso.

Classical Opera’s first two recordings – ‘The A-Z of Mozart Opera’ (Sony BMG, 2007, re-released on Signum Classics, 2014) and ‘Blessed Spirit – a Gluck retrospective’ (Wigmore Hall Live, 2010) – were both selected for Gramophone magazine’s annual Critic’s Choice.

In May 2016 the company released ‘Where’er You Walk’, with tenor Allan Clayton, which was shortlisted for the 2017 International Opera Awards, and this was followed in May 2017 by The Mozartists’ début recording ‘Perfido!’, a programme of Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven concert arias featuring soprano Sophie Bevan. Il sogno di Scipione is the sixth release in Classical Opera’s complete recording cycle of Mozart’s operas.
COSTANZA: Guardami in volto.

SCIPIO: Oh Dei!
Quale abisso di luce!
Quale ignota armonia! quali sembianze
Son queste mai sì luminose e liete!
E in qual parte mi trovo? E voi chi siete?

COSTANZA: Nutrice degli Eroi.

FORTUNA: Dispensatrice
Di tutto il ben, che l’universo aduna.

COSTANZA: Scipio, io son la Costanza.

FORTUNA: Io la Fortuna.

SCIPIO: E da me che si vuol?

COSTANZA: Che una fra noi
Nel cammin della vita
Tu per compagna elegga.
SCIPIONE: E come?
Se volete ch’io parli,
Se risolver degg’io, lasciate all’alma
Tempo da respirar, spazio onde possa
Riconoscer se stessa.

Ditemi, dove son, chi qua mi trasse,
Se vero è quel ch’io veggio,
Se sogno, se son desto, o se vaneggio.

But how?
If you wish me to speak,
if I must decide, allow my soul
time to breathe, space in which it can
gather itself.

No.1, Aria

SCIPIO:
Risolver non osa
Confusa la mente,
Che oppressa si sente
Da tanto stupor.

Delira dubbiosa,
Incerta vaneggia
Ogn’ alma che ondeggia
Fra’ moti del cor.

Recitativo

FORTUNA:
Entrambi offriamo
Di renderli felice.

FORTUNA:
Si, ma sion brevi,
Scipio, le tue richieste. Intollerante
Di riposo son io. Loco ed aspetto
Andar sempre cambiando e mio diletto.

SCIPIO:
But how?
If you wish me to speak,
if I must decide, allow my soul
time to breathe, space in which it can gather itself.

Tell me where I am, who brought me here,
if what I see is real, if I’m dreaming,
if I’m awake, or if this is a delusion.

FORTUNA:
We both offer
to make you happy.

FORTUNA:
Speak!

FORTUNA:
Decide!
No. 2, Aria
FORTUNA:
Lieve sono al par del vento; 
vioso ho il volo, il piet fugace; 
Or m’adiro, e in un momento 
Or m’addorso a seppur.
Sollevare le moli espressa, 
Più m’alatta, e poi mi piace 
D’attentar le moli istesse 
Che ho sudato a sollevar.

Recitative
SCIPIO:
Dunque ove son? la reggia 
Di Massinissa, ove poc’ anzi i lumi 
Al sonno abbandonai, 
Certo questa non é.
COSTANZA:
No: lungi assai 
È l’Africa da noi. Sei nell’immenso 
Tempio del ciel.

FORTUNA:
Non lo conosci a tante 
Che ti splendono intorno 
Lucidissime stelle? A quel che ascolti 
Insolito concerto 
Delle mobili sfere? A quel che vedi 
Di lucido zaffiro 
Orbe maggior, che le rapisce in giro?

No. 2, Aria
FORTUNE:
I am as capricious as the wind; 
My face is changeable, my foot fleeting; 
one moment I’m enraged, but the next moment 
I return to being calm. Firstly it delights me to raise up 
ruin buildings, and then it gives me pleasure 
to demolish those same buildings 
that I have toiled to erect.

Recitative
SCIPIO:
Then where am I? This is certainly 
not Massinissa’s palace, 
where a short time ago 
I surrendered my eyes to sleep.
COSTANZA:
No. Africa is a very long way 
away from us. You are in 
the immense temple of heaven.

FORTUNE:
Can you not recognise it 
from so many radiant stars that shine 
around you, from the unaccustomed harmony 
of the moving spheres that you can hear, 
from that great globe 
of gleaming sapphire that you can see, 
which forces them into orbit?

SCIPIO:
And who, o goddesses, creates from the spheres 
such a melodious and sonorous harmony?
COSTANZA:
That same inequality of proportion 
which exists between them 
in movement and in size. Together 
they collide in their orbit; each gives out 
a different sound from the next, 
and from all of them a harmonious sound is formed. 
The strings of a lyre are likewise different, 
and yet in the same way both ear and hand 
moderate the treble and the bass, 
producing, when struck, a sweet harmony.
This miraculous combination, 
this mysterious ratio 
that unites dissimilar things, 
is called proportion, the order 
and universal principle of all creation. 
This is what lay hidden, 
the mysterious ray of a higher knowledge, 
within the numbers of the sage of Samos.

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1 This is a reference to the famous philosopher, astronomer and mathematician Pythagoras, who was born on the island of Samos in c.570 BC. Pythagoras observed that on the Greek seven-string (a harmonious notes sounded when the lengths of those strings were proportional to whole numbers, e.g. 2:1, 3:2, 4:3. He then extended this notion to the so-called ‘harmony of the spheres’, the theory that the movement of planets and stars corresponded to the same mathematical equations that governed musical harmony.
COSTANZA: Ne han molti e vari in varie parti.

SCIPIO: Ma un armonia si grande
Perché non giunge a noi? Perché non l’ode
Chi vive là nella temerite sede?

COSTANZA: Troppo il poter de’ vostri sensi eccede.

SCIPIO: But why does such a glorious harmony
not reach us? Why is it not heard
by those living in the realm of earth?

COSTANZA: It too far exceeds the scope of your senses.

SCIPIO: But what inhabitants do these eternal realms have?

COSTANZA: Ne han molti e vari in varie parti.

SCIPIO: In questa,
Ove noi siam, chi si raccoglie mai?

FORTUNE: Guarda sol chi s’appressa, e lo saprai.

COSTANZA: Too far exceeds the scope of your senses.

SCIPIO: And which inhabitants...?

FORTUNE: Assai chiedesti:
Eleggi al fin.

SCIPIO: Bear with me a moment. And what
inhabitants do these eternal realms have?

FORTUNE: Just look who is approaching, and you will find out.

COSTANZA: They have many, and different ones in different parts.

SCIPIO: In this one, where we are,
who are gathered together?

FORTUNE: Heavens, is it true, or am I deluding myself?

Is that not my great ancestor,
who tamed the African rebellion?
No, Scipio; the most perfect of all causes, the prime cause cannot be so unjust. Beyond the funeral pyre there is the mercy of hope. Those radiant eternal realms that you see are reserved for merit; and the most beautiful is this one, in which live with me whoever on earth loved their country, whoever piously devoted their life to the public well-being, and who shed their blood for the good of others.

No. 5, Aria

PUBLIO:
If you wish these realms to welcome you one day, remember your ancestors, do not forget me.

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
If here live the heroes…

FORTUNA:
If your wish is not yet fulfilled, Scipio, my patience is already exhausted. Decide…

No. 5, Aria

PUBLIO:
Do not doubt it; I am he.

SCIPIO:
I freeze with horror! Then the dead…?

PUBLIUS:
Ah, be silent! You little know yourself. So do you believe that that hand, that face, those frail limbs in which you are encircled constitute Scipio? Ah, it is not true. These are merely your outer cloak. That pure, immortal spark which brings them to life, which has no parts, and which cannot choose what it wishes, what it intends, what it remembers, what it thinks, which does not lose its vitality with the years; that, that is Scipio; and that does not die. The fate of the virtuous would be too harsh if nothing of us were to remain beyond the tomb, and if there were no delights for you other than those which on earth fall mostly to the wicked.

No, Scipio: the perfetta
d'ogni cagion, prima cagione ingiusta
Esser così non può. V'è dopo il rogo,
v'è mercè da sperar. Quelle che vedi
Lucide eterne sedi
Serbansi al merto: e la più bella è questa,
In cui vive con me qualunque in terra
La patria amò, qualunque offri pietoso
Al pubblico riposo i giorni suoi,
Chi sparse il sangue a beneficio altrui.

PUBLIO:
Ah taci:
Poco sei noto a te. Dunque tu credi
Che quella man, quel volto,
E' scoglier non si può che vial, che intende,
Che rammenta, che pensa,
Che non perde con gli anni il suo vigore,
Quello, quello è Scipione; e quel non muore.

Trippo iniqui il destino
Sara della vita, s'oltra la tomba
Nulla di noi restasse; e s'alti beni
Non vi fosser di quei
Che in terra per lo più toccano a' rei.

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivon gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…

Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Se qui vivono gli eroi…

FORTUNA:
Se paga ancora
La tua brama non è, Scipio, è già stanca
La tolleranza mia. Decidi…
EMILIO: Figlio, il contento fra noi serba nel Cielo altro tenore. Qui non giunge all'affanno, ed è maggiore.

SCIPIONE: Son fuor di me. Tutto quassù m'è nuovo, Tutto stupir mi fa.

EMILIO: Depor non puoi Le false idee che ti formasti in terra, E ne stai sì lontano. Abbassa il ciglio: Vedi laggiù d'impure nebbie avvolto Quel picciol globo, anzi quel punto?

SCIPIONE: Oh stelle! È la terra?

EMILIO: Il dicesti.

SCIPIONE: E tanti mari, E tanti fiumi e tante selve e tante vastissime province, opposti regni, Popoli differenti? E il Tebro? E Roma?...

EMILIO: Tutto è chiuso in quel punto.
Recitativo

SCIPIONE:
Ah, padre amato,
Che picciolo, che vano,
Che misero teatro ha il fasto umano!

EMIILIO:
Oh, se di quel teatro
Potessi, al figlio, esaminar gli attori;
Se le folle, gli errori,
I sogni lor veder potessi, e quale
Di ritorno per il più degna cagione
Gli agita, gli scaccia,
Gli allagge o gl’innamora
Quanto più vil vi sembrerebbe ancor!

SCIPIO:
Ah, beloved father,
what a miniscule, vain and wretched stage
does human pride occupy!

AEMILIUS:
Oh, if you could examine
the actors on that stage, my son,
if you could observe their follies, their mistakes,
their dreams, and see what cause,
derisory for the most part,
is enough to agitate, disturb,
delight, afflic or enchant them,
how much more contemptible still would it
seem to you!

No. 6, Aria

EMIILIO:
Voi colaggii ridete
D’un fanciullin che piange,
Che la cagion vedete
Del folle suo dolor.

SCIPIO:
Ah, beloved father,
what a miniscule, vain and wretched stage
does human pride occupy!

AEMILIUS:
Oh, if you could examine
the actors on that stage, my son,
if you could observe their follies, their mistakes,
their dreams, and see what cause,
derisory for the most part,
is enough to agitate, disturb,
delight, afflic or enchant them,
how much more contemptible still would it
seem to you!

EMIILIO:
Si, ma non basta
A’ disegni del fato, al ben di Roma,
Al mondo, al ciel.

SCIPIO:
Ah, beloved father,
what a miniscule, vain and wretched stage
does human pride occupy!

AEMILIUS:
Oh, if you could examine
the actors on that stage, my son,
if you could observe their follies, their mistakes,
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Si, ma non basta
A’ disegni del fato, al ben di Roma,
Al mondo, al ciel.

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does human pride occupy!

AEMILIUS:
Oh, if you could examine
the actors on that stage, my son,
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is enough to agitate, disturb,
delight, afflic or enchant them,
how much more contemptible still would it
seem to you!

EMIILIO:
Si, ma non basta
A’ disegni del fato, al ben di Roma,
Al mondo, al ciel.

SCIPIO:
Ah, beloved father,
what a miniscule, vain and wretched stage
does human pride occupy!

AEMILIUS:
Oh, if you could examine
the actors on that stage, my son,
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A’ disegni del fato, al ben di Roma,
Al mondo, al ciel.

SCIPIO:
Ah, beloved father,
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AEMILIUS:
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the actors on that stage, my son,
if you could observe their follies, their mistakes,
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if you could observe their follies, their mistakes,
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derisory for the most part,
is enough to agitate, disturb,
delight, afflic or enchant them,
how much more contemptible still would it
seem to you!

EMIILIO:
Si, ma non basta
A’ disegni del fato, al ben di Roma,
Al mondo, al ciel.

SCIPIO:
Ah, beloved father,
what a miniscule, vain and wretched stage
does human pride occupy!
I gloriosi tuoi primi sudori
Per le campagne libere
A caso non sparagi; e non a caso
Porti quel nome in fronte
Che all’Africa è fatale. A me tu dato
Il soggiogar si gran nemico; e tocca
Il distruggerla a te. Va, ma prepara
Non meno alle sventure
Che a’ tuoi virtù di tua patria. In ogni sorte
L’idea è la virtù. L’agire, è vero,
Il nemico desti, ma non l’opprime;
E quando è men felice, è più sublime.

FORTUNA:
Now you are informed: you must choose between us.

SCIPIO:
Publius, it is required
that one of these goddesses...

PUBLIO:
Tutto m’è noto.
Eleggi a voglia tua.

SCIPIO:
Deh mi consiglia,
Gran genitor!

AEMILIUS:
Ti usurperebbe, o figlio,
La gloria della scelta il mio consiglio.

FORTUNA:
Se brami esser felice,
Scipio, non mi stancar: prendi il momento
In cui t’offro il crin.

SCIPIO:
Ma tu che tanto
Importuna mi sei, di’: qual ragione
Tuo seguace mi vuoi? Perché degg’io
Sceglier più che l’altra?

SCIPIO:
Since it is useless to oppose
the will of the Fates, I shall obey.

CONSTANCE:
Scipio, it is now time to choose.

FORTUNA:
Se brami esser felice,
Scipio, non mi stancar: prendi il momento
In cui t’offro il crin.

SCIPIO:
Ma tu che tanto
Importuna mi sei, di’: qual ragione
Tuo seguace mi vuoi? Perché degg’io
Sceglier più che l’altra?

FORTUNE:
Now you are informed: you must choose between us.

SCIPIO:
Publius, it is required
that one of these goddesses...

PUBLIO:
Tutto m’è noto.
Eleggi a voglia tua.

SCIPIO:
Deh mi consiglia,
Gran genitor!

AEMILIUS:
My advice would usurp
the glory of your choice, my son.

FORTUNE:
If you want to be happy,
Scipio, do not tire me: seize the moment
in which I offer you the crown.

SCIPIO:
Since it is useless to oppose
the will of the Fates, I shall obey.

CONSTANCE:
Scipio, it is now time to choose.
Ma se a taluno io giro
Torbido il guardo e fosco,
Fronde gli niega il bosco,
Onde non trova in mar.

Recitativo

SCIPIO:
E a sì enorme possanza
Chi s’opponga non v’è?

CONSTANCY:
Sì, la Costanza.
Io, Scipio, io sol prescrivo
Limiti e leggi al suo temuto impero.

Dove son io non giunge
L’instabile a regnar; che in faccia mia
Non han luce i suoi doni,
Nè orror le sue minacce. È ver che oltraggio
Soffron talor da lei
Il valor, la virtù; ma le bell’opre,
Vindice de’ miei torti, il tempo scopre.

Son io, non è costei,
Che conservo gl’imperi: e gli avi tuoi,
La tua Roma lo sa. Crolla ristretta
Da Brennus, è ver, la libertà latina
Nell’angusto Tarpeo, ma non ruina.

\[2\]

The Tarpeian Rock was a steep cliff on the southern peak of the Capitoline Hill in Ancient Rome, used as an execution site. The Gallic chieftain Brennus defeated the Romans in the Battle of Allia on 18 July 390 BC and entered Rome, the only time the city was occupied by foreigners before its fall to the Goths in 410 AD. The Roman consul Marcus Manlius became a hero, defying Brennus for several months. He subsequently led a programme of social reform, relieving the poor and accusing the Roman Senate of embezzling public money. They sentenced him to death, and he was thrown from the Tarpeian Rock in 384 BC.

Fortuna: And what will you do if I do not benevolently support your undertakings? Do you know what I can do? I am the arbiter of all that is bad or good down on earth. This is the hand that bestows, at its will, both joys and sorrows, both efforts and honours, both poverty and wealth. I am the one who builds, who destroys, who renew empires. If it pleases me, I change a hovel into a throne, or, when I wish to, a throne into a hovel. The gales in the sky and the storms at sea are subject to me. I determine the outcome of battles. If I feel kindly disposed I can snatch the laurels away from the victors right at the moment of conquest. What else? Neither courage nor virtue are impervious to my rule, for when Fate wills it, the basest thing seems mighty, the mightiest base; and in defiance of justice guilt is good and innocence is evil.

No. 8, Aria

FORTUNA: A chi serena io miro
Chiaro è di notte il cielo;
Torna per lui nel gelo
La terra a germogliar.
Dell’Aufido alle sponde
Si vede, è ver, miseramente intorno
Tutta perir la gioventù guerriera
Il Console romano, ma non dispera.
Annibale s’affretta
Di Roma ad ottenere l’ultimo vanto,
E co’ vessilli suoi quasi l’adombra;
Ma trova in Roma intanto
Pezzo il terren che vincitore ingombra.
Son mie prove si belle, e a queste prove
Non resiste Fortuna. Ella si stanca;
E al fin cambiando aspetto,
Mia suddita diventa suo dispetto.

No. 9, Aria
COSTANZA:
Biancheggia in mar lo scoglio,
Par che vacilli, e pare
Che lo sommerga il mare
Fatto maggior di sè.
Ma dura a tanto orgoglio
Quel combattuto sasso;
E’l mar tranquillo e basso
Poi gli lambisce il piè.

Recitativo
SCIPIONE:
Non più. Bella Costanza,
Guidami dove vuoi. D’altri non curo;
Eccomi tuo seguace.

On the banks of the river Aufidus
all the military youth, it is true,
was wretchedly seen to perish around the
Roman consul, but there was no despair.
Hannibal hurried to secure
the ultimate trophy of Rome, and with his
standard-bearers he almost reached it;
but meanwhile in Rome the terrain assumed
a price that humiliated the conqueror.
These are great tests of my power; and Fortune
cannot withstand these tests. She grows tired,
and eventually changing aspect,
she becomes my subject despite herself.

No. 9, Aria
CONSTANCY:
The rock turns white in the sea,
seeming to vacillate, and it seems
that the sea, towering above it,
is submerging it.

But that battered stone
endures with so much pride,
and the sea, becalmed and low,
then laps at its feet.

Recitative
SCIPIONE:
No more. Fair Constancy,
lead me wherever you wish. I heed no others;
here I am as your disciple.

No. 10, Aria
SCIPIONE:
Di che sei l’arbitra
Del mondo intero,
Ma non pretendere
Perciò l’impero
D’un’alma intrepida,
D’un nobil cor.

FORTUNA:
E i doni miei?
SCIPIONE:
Non bramo e non ricuso.
FORTUNA:
E mio furore?
SCIPIONE:
Non sfido e non pavento.
FORTUNA:
In van potresti,
Scipio, pentirti un dì. Guardami in viso:
Pensaci, e poi decidi.
SCIPIONE:
Ho già deciso.

No. 10, Aria
SCIPIONE:
Di’ che sei l’arbitra
Del mondo intero,
Ma non pretendere
Perciò l’impero
D’un’alma intrepida,
D’un nobil cor.
Te vili adorino, 
Nume tiranno, 
Quei che non prezzano, 
Quei che non hanno 
Che il basso merito 
Del tuo favor.

Let the faint-hearted worship you, 
Tyramical goddess, 
those who prize and 
have nothing 
but the lowly reward of your favour.

Accompanied recitative

FORTUNA: 
E v'è mortal che ardisca 
Negarmi i voti suoi? che il favor mio 
Non procuri ottener?

SCIPIONE: 
Si, vi son io.

FORTUNA: 
E ben, provami avversa. Olà, venite, 
Ombre disfatte, altre sventure, 
Ministre del mio sdegno: 
Quell'audace opprimete; io vel consegno.

SCIPIONE: 
Stelle, che fia? Quel sanguinosa luce! 
Che nembi! che tempeste! 
Che tenebre son queste? Ah qual rimbomba 
Per le sconvolte sfere 
Terribile fragor! Cento saette 
Mi striscian fra le chiome; e par che tutto 
Vada sossopra il ciel. No, non pavento, 
Empia Fortuna: invan minacci; invano 
Perfida, ingiusta Dea... Ma chi mi scuote?

LICENZA

Recitative

Non è Scipio, o signore (ah chi potrebbe 
Mentir dinanzi a te!) non è l'oggetto 
Scipio de' versi miei. Di te ragiono, 
Quando parlo di lui. Quel nome illustre 
È un vel di cui si copre 
Il rispettoso mio giusto timore. 
Ma Scipio esalta il labbro, e di Girolamo il core.

No.11, Aria

Ah perchè cercar degg'io 
Fra gli avanzi dell'oblio 
Ciò che in te ne dona il ciel!

Di virtù chi prove chiede, 
L'ode in quelli, in te le vede: 
E l'orecchio ognor del guardo 
È più tardo e men fedel.

With whom am I talking? Where am I? This is indeed Massinissa’s palace. And Publius? And my father? And the stars? And heaven? All have vanished. Was everything I saw a dream then? No, Constancy was not a dream; she has stayed with me. I feel her divinity filling my breast. I understand you, friendly gods: I acknowledge the portent.

LICENZA

Recitative

It is not Scipio, my lord (ah who could tell 
a lie in front of you?), Scipio is not the subject 
of my verses. I am thinking of you 
when I speak of him. His illustrious name 
is a veil which covers my suitably respectful 
awe of you. But while my lips 
exalt Scipio, my heart exalts Hieronymus.

No.11, Aria

Ah why should I search 
among the relics of the past 
for that which heaven has granted in you?

He who seeks proof of virtue can 
hear it in these lines and can see it in you; 
and the ear is always slower 
and less reliable than the eye.
No.12, Coro
Cento volte con lieto sembiante,
Prence eccelso, dall’onde marine
Torni l’alba d’un dì sì seren.
E rispetti la diva inconstante
Quella mitra che porti sul crine,
L’alma grande che chiudi nel sen.

APPENDIX
No.11, Aria (versione originale)
Ah perchè cercar degg’io
Fra gli avanzi dell’oblio
Ciò che in te ne dona il ciel!
Di virtù chi prove chiede,
L’ode in quelli, in te le vede:
E l’orecchio ognor del guardo
È più tardo e men fedel.

No.12, Chorus
May the dawn of so happy a day,
exalted prince, return a hundred times
with a smiling face from the ocean’s waves.

APPENDIX
No.11, Aria (original version)
Ah why should I search
among the relics of the past
for that which heaven has granted us in you?

He who seeks proof of virtue can
hear it in these lines and can see it in you;
and the ear is always slower
and less reliable than the eye.
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Scipione

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