

Neil Cox

Keep me as the apple of an eye

for unaccompanied mixed voices

COMPOSER'S NOTE

This short piece springs from a visit to hear Choral Evensong at Gloucester Cathedral on 8 October 2008. Sitting in the Quire before the service, I marvelled at the very special quality of sound in that extraordinary acoustic, and considered the legacy of the Cathedral's musical heritage. Eventually, all this was to come together in a piece designed to exploit the huge spaces of the building and to celebrate its inheritance.

Composed in 2008, this anthem begins with the F sharp major triads of Herbert Howells' Magnificat from his Gloucester Service. The tenor solo passage in bars 17–19 recalls the melodic shape of the viola solo at letter B of Vaughan Williams' masterpiece, Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis, first performed in Gloucester Cathedral in September 1910. The phrase occurs just once in the anthem, a passing reminiscence and a tribute to all the music written specifically for that great building.

I am very grateful to Nikki Dragonetti, Damian Kerney, Ewan Stockwell and Joseph Wicks for their words of encouragement, and to Adrian Partington and the Choir of Gloucester Cathedral for bringing this piece to fruition with its first performance as part of Evensong on Sunday 17 May 2009, and with its first broadcast as part of the BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong from Gloucester on Wednesday 21 October 2009.

Keep me as the apple of an eye

Words: Psalm 17.8 and the
antiphon from Compline

Music: NEIL COX

Very smoothly and with feeling ♩ = 56

SOPRANO
Keep me as the

ALTO
Keep me as the

TENOR
Keep me as the ap-ple of an eye,

BASS
Keep me as the ap-ple of an eye,

6
S.
ap-ple of an eye,

A.
ap-ple of an eye,

T. I
Keep me as the ap - - - - ple of an

T. II
Keep me as the ap - - - - ple of an

B.
Keep me as the ap - - - - ple of an

The musical score is written for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. It begins with a tempo instruction 'Very smoothly and with feeling' and a metronome marking of ♩ = 56. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. The Soprano and Alto parts enter with a half rest followed by a quarter rest, then sing 'Keep me as the'. The Tenor and Bass parts enter with a half rest followed by a quarter rest, then sing 'Keep me as the ap-ple of an eye,'. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp* and *p*, and various musical notations including slurs, ties, and fermatas. A large watermark 'PREMIUM COPY' is visible across the page.

11 *mp* *rit.*
p

S. I as the ap - - - - - ple of an eye, — the

S. II as the ap - - - - - ple of an eye, — the

A. *mp* as the ap - - - - - ple of an eye, — the

T. I *pp* eye, — the *p espress.*

T. II *pp* eye, — the *p*

B. *pp* eye, — the *p*

15 *a tempo*

ap - - ple of an eye: —

ap - - ple of an eye: —

ap - - ple of an eye: —

mp TENOR SOLO *
ap - - ple of an eye: — hide me un-der the sha - - dow of thy wings,

ap - - ple of an eye: —

ap - - ple of an eye: —

* This 3 bar passage recalls the idea from Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis*

20 *f* *ff* *mp*

hide me, hide me un - der the sha-dow of thy wings, the

hide me, hide me un - der the sha-dow of thy wings, the

hide me, hide me un - der the sha-dow of thy wings, the

FULL *f* *ff* *mp*

hide me, hide me un - der the sha-dow of thy wings, the

FULL *f* *ff* *mp*

hide me, hide me un - der the sha-dow of thy wings, the

f *ff*

hide me, hide me un - der the sha-dow of thy wings,

24 *poco rit.* *a tempo* *pp*

sha - dow of thy wings.

sha - dow of thy wings.

sha - dow of thy wings. *p* Keep me as the ap-ple of an

sha - dow of thy wings. *p* Keep me as the ap-ple of an

sha - dow of thy wings. *p* Keep me as the ap-ple of an

(sonorous) *p*

Keep me as the ap-ple of an

28

pp Keep me as the ap - ple of an eye. —

pp Keep me as the ap - ple of an eye. —

pp eye, Keep me as the ap - ple of an eye. —

pp eye. —

pp eye. —

pp eye. —

31

ff Grant us thy light,

ff Grant us thy light, —

ff Grant us thy light, —

T. SOLO *mp* Lord, Lord, grant us thy light, —

FULL *f* Lord, grant us thy light, —

FULL *f* Lord, grant us thy light, —

ff Grant us thy light, —