

**The letter from an unsuccessful application to the Dean and Chapter of
Lichfield Cathedral for the post of Bass Lay Vicar Choral in January 1844**

*reproduced from the Lichfield Record Office Archive, document reference: D30/7/2/32
(with editorial amendments to the penultimate paragraph for clarity)*

Hull

January 12th 1844

Sir,

Observing your advertisement in the Times newspaper of the 11th January, I am induced to reply to it. I have no doubt I shall be the fortunate candidate for the office of Lay Vicar in your cathedral, for the simple reason that this is the only application you are likely to have.

My singing qualifications are first rate, but as like Malibran¹ I always require porter and stout *ad libitum* – I shall be glad to know if these are furnished out of the cathedral church. I should also require a certain portion of warm clothing in such a cold place, with which I am unprovided and perhaps a small advance towards this object, (which if in the first instance it be refused), cold being greatly prejudicial to the efficacy of a voice in singing, particularly a Bass.

My moral qualifications are a secondary matter and therefore I shall only glance at them – they are of that order usually possessed by single male singers in cathedrals and I confess, like my voice, a good deal affected by warmth and moisture.

My age as the third point. I am more diffident in mentioning this is a delicate question, but however I can make it quite agreeable to you. I come down to Lichfield at any age from 20 – 50 and I hope that will do.

I am, I may add, sufficiently young to make eyes at the various young ladies and sing the old melodies at the various services – a very material point I think. I have now a question to ask in my turn, which is whether you guarantee me with the trifle of £100^{pa}, as perhaps the “considered average” salary might be a good deal short of the £50 for which my butcher and baker would sing treble.

I shall be glad of a swift reply and am your eager aspirant

¹ This is presumably a reference to the mezzo-soprano Maria Malibran (1808-1836), of whom it was well-known, according to *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country (Volume XV January to June 1837)*, that she, ‘like many foreign *artistes*, of both sexes, preferred porter (bottled stout) to any other beverage’ (p537).