

**A petition from the Subchanter and Vicars Choral of Lichfield Cathedral  
against John Alcock, Organist and Vicar Choral, 1758**

*reproduced from the Lichfield Record Office Archive, document reference: D30/7/2/51*

To the Reverend the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral Church of Lichfield, or any Three or more of them who shall happen to be present in Chapter when this writing is presented; Containing the humble Petition of the Subchanter and Vicars Choral belonging to the said Church.

Gentlemen –

Whereas frequent Complaints have been made to the Dean and Chapter, by the Subchanter and Vicars, of Mr. John Alcock, Organist and Vicar Choral of the said Church; whose Behaviour in Time of Divine Service has given great and just offence, not only to us, but to those too who attend Divine Service in this Church, as well Strangers as Neighbours; and whereas those complaints have not hitherto been attended with the desir'd Reformation: so far from that, the said John Alcock is become more and more scandalous and indecent in his Behaviours, to the great Grief and Disturbance of the Congregation: We therefore the Subchanter and Vicars Choral who Names are hereunto Subscrib'd, make it our unanimous Request and Petition, that the said John Alcock may be regularly and formally Admonished in Chapter, and the said Admonition be registered (in terrorem) to the Intent He may not hereafter offend in a manner so audacious and irreverent. That if the Subchanter shall think it his Duty to entreat him (as heretofore) to play Slower or Faster, as Occasion may require, He may not show his Contempt or Indignation by playing the Chants, Services, or Anthems so fast that the Choir cannot sometimes articulate half the words; or else so slow that their Breath will not serve to hold out the long, loitering, dragging Notes. That He may not hereafter mock, and mimick with his Voice any of the Vicars, as He frequently has done, in the Responses, and even in the Confession. That He may not show his Splenetic Tricks upon the Organ to expose or confound the Performers, or burlesque their manner of Singing. That He may not play Full where He ought not; or so Loud (in the Verses especially) that the softer Voices cannot be heard at all; no Voices distinctly. That He may have some Regard to the Sacredness of the Place and the Solemnity of the Worship; that so we may perform all things decently and in Order, and may attend on the Service of God without Distraction.

John White, Subc.

Hen. Wood

B Bond

F. Bird

J [illegible signature]

J. Saville

Danl. Wm. Remington

Richd. R Short

Thos. White

T. Edmonds

To the Reverend the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral Church of Lichfield, or any Three or more of them who shall happen to be present in Chapter when this writing is presented; Containing the humble Petition of the Subchanter and Vicar-Choral belonging to the said Church.

Gentlemen —

Whereas frequent Complaints have been made to the Dean and Chapter, by the Subchanter and Vicar, of Mr. John Alcock, Organist and Vicar-Choral of the said Church; whose Behaviour in Time of Divine Service has given great and just offence, not only to us, but to those too who attend Divine Service in this Church, as well Strangers as Neighbours; and whereas those complaints have not hitherto been attended with the desired Reformation: so far from that, the said John Alcock is become more and more scandalous and indecent in his Behaviour, to the great Grief and Disturbance of the Congregation: We therefore the Subchanter and Vicar-Choral whose Names are hereunto Subscrib'd, make it our unanimous Request and Petition, that the said John Alcock may be regularly and formally Admonished in Chapter, and the said Admonition be registered (in terrorem) to the Intent He may not hereafter offend in a manner so audacious and irreverent. That if the Subchanter shall think it his Duty to exhort him (as heretofore) to play slower or faster, as Occasion may require, He may not show his Contempt or Indignation by playing the Chants, Services, or Anthems so fast that the Choir cannot sometimes articulate half the words; or else so slow that their Breath will not serve to hold out the long, loitering, dragging Notes. That He may not hereafter mock, and mimic with his Voice any of the Vicars, as He frequently has done, in the Responses, and even in the Confession. That He may not show his

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perform all things decently and in order, and may  
attend on the Service of God without Distraction.

John White Subv.

B. Bond

J. M. M.

Jan. W. Remington

Ch. White

Hen. Wood  
J. Bird

J. Saville

Rich. R. Short.

J. Edmonds