

Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus

SEMICHORUS SELECTION

The semi-choruses that we need from time to time vary in size and make-up. I choose people for the semi-chorus on the basis of the latest auditions and re-auditions. It's important to stress that whether or not you are chosen for the semi-chorus is not necessarily a judgement on the quality of your singing; the kind of voices chosen will depend on the musical style of the piece and the exact function of the semichorus, although musical confidence and fluency are important.

Pieces with a semichorus fall into two categories. The first would include a piece like the Duruflé Requiem, where the semichorus is simply for when a smaller choir or a lighter sound is required. The second would include a piece like Gerontius, where the semi-chorus sings at the same time as the main chorus but has an independent part. In the latter case it's important that all the strongest singers are not removed from the main chorus to be in the semichorus – we need strong singers in both groups.

If you're wondering why you have been chosen on one occasion but not another, it could be because some voices that are suitable for a semichorus in one piece are less suitable for another one, and the pieces also vary in musical difficulty. Even if it's the same piece, it's important to give different people a chance, especially new members, rather than always using the same people.

If you are chosen to sing in the semichorus, be aware that we might place a higher attendance requirement on the semichorus rehearsals, and that these may involve staying a little later than the normal rehearsal times. If you are selected but don't wish to be included, please let us know as soon as you can.

Darius Battiwalla

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