

MKSS Student Level Q&A

● Can students freely choose their Level class?

Answer: No.

All Level placements at MKSS are determined by the **head instructor, Miss Ke Mao**.

Students at different Levels vary greatly in their years of vocal study, technical ability, repertoire accumulation, and stage experience.

The MKSS Level system is based on Miss Mao's professional evaluation of each student's **musicianship, vocal technique, learning attitude, and artistic growth**.

This ensures that every student studies at the most suitable stage for their development and continues to make **steady and meaningful progress**.

● Do students move up to a higher Level or change classes every semester?

Answer: Not necessarily.

The MKSS Level structure is different from the regular school "grade system."

We focus on **long-term skill development** rather than automatic semester promotion.

A Level advancement occurs only when a student reaches the required standards of **technical ability, musical understanding, and artistic expression**.

The Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced Levels each have distinct expectations in repertoire, vocal training, and stage performance.

At the end of every term, **Miss Mao personally evaluates** each student's overall progress and recommends a Level change only when it is appropriate.

However, if a student does not maintain sufficient practice outside of class or show consistent improvement, they may remain in the Beginner Level until they meet the standards required for the MKSS Intermediate Level.

● How are MKSS Levels and class designations structured?

MKSS currently offers three main stages of study: **Beginner Level, Intermediate Level, and Advanced Level**, corresponding to the **Little Star, Rising Star, and Golden Star** programs.

Unlike regular schools where students move up by grade each year, the MKSS system follows the philosophy of **"Same people, growing ability, evolving Level."**

This means that the same group of students can remain together as a team while their collective skill level and musical depth increase, leading to higher Levels of study within the same class group.

For example:

The students in **Class 01R+** originally began as **01L (Little Star, Beginner Level)**.

Through consistent effort, a positive learning atmosphere, and strong team spirit, the class advanced to **01L+ (Beginner Plus)**, then to **01R (Rising Star, Intermediate Level)**, and is now **01R+**.

Over the past few years, their overall vocal ability has improved significantly, and many students have received awards in major vocal competitions across Toronto and Ontario.

This outstanding group continues to grow together, working toward the **MKSS Golden Star Advanced Level**.

Another example is the **MKSS Advanced Level classes**, whose students have typically studied at MKSS for **three to four years or more**, developing a strong repertoire foundation, mature vocal control, and confident stage presence before reaching this stage.

MKSS Programs Overview

● **Beginner Level — Little Star Vocal Program**

Designed for children who love singing but have little or no formal vocal training experience.

This program focuses on cultivating musical interest and building strong foundational technique.

Lessons are carefully structured around children's psychological and physical development, using fun, interactive activities to inspire motivation and confidence.

Main areas of study:

- Correct posture and basic breathing and vocal techniques
- Pitch and rhythm accuracy training
- Ear training and fundamental music theory
- Clear diction and healthy vocal habits
- Storytelling and emotional expression through singing
- Interactive musical games that make learning joyful

Repertoire includes:

Age-appropriate North American youth songs, musical theatre excerpts, Disney and film music, English and French children's songs, North American folk and art songs, as well as Mandarin and multilingual repertoire.

Each semester, new themed material is introduced. Teachers adapt lesson content to each student's progress, helping children build confidence and musical foundations through joy and creativity.

● **Intermediate Level — Rising Star Vocal Program**

Designed for students who already possess basic singing experience and wish to further develop their technique and artistic expression. This program transitions from simple vocal practice to comprehensive musical storytelling and stage performance. Starting from the Intermediate Level, MKSS classes are **divided by gender**, as the repertoire becomes more structured, dramatic, and character-driven, with songs written specifically for male or female voices.

Program highlights:

- Development of breath support and resonance technique

- Multilingual diction and lyric interpretation
- Theatrical performance and character portrayal
- Advanced repertoire training (Musical Theatre, North American & European Art Songs)
- Preparation for RCM examinations, vocal competitions, and live performances
- Integration of vocal performance, theory, sight-singing, and music analysis

Recommended for students who:

- Have studied at MKSS for at least one year or more
- Have participated in multiple solo or stage performances
- Demonstrate consistent attendance, positive learning attitude, and strong home practice habits
- Are interested in RCM Voice Exams or vocal competitions
- Have participated in small competitions with good results, or are ready for similar performance levels
- Can read simple sheet music or play melodic lines (instrumental background is an asset)
- Are curious about various musical styles, languages, and vocal storytelling

● **Advanced Level — Golden Star Vocal Program**

Designed for students with solid vocal foundations who wish to pursue professional-level vocal artistry and challenge themselves with advanced repertoire.

This program emphasizes artistry, interpretation, and stage performance at a higher technical and expressive level, preparing students for concerts, competitions, and RCM examinations.

Core training areas:

- Advanced vocal technique and tonal control
- Breath management and musical phrasing
- Lyric diction and multilingual repertoire across diverse styles
- Precision in musical interpretation and expression
- Enhanced stage presence, movement training, and facial expressiveness

Recommended for students who:

- Have studied at MKSS for two years or more, with a diverse repertoire background (Musical Theatre, Art Songs, North American folk, pop, Mandarin songs, and RCM exam pieces)
- Have demonstrated solid technique and performed multiple solo works
- Have achieved strong results in Ontario-level vocal competitions or equivalent performance ability
- Can independently study and interpret new repertoire, with some instrumental proficiency
- Possess strong passion for vocal performance and stage artistry

Note

All MKSS programs are structured according to each student's current ability and developmental stage. Participation in competitions, RCM examinations, or public performances is **optional**, based on each student's interests and family schedule.