Ensemble ACJW is a two-year fellowship program for the finest young professional classical musicians in the United States that prepares them for careers combining musical excellence with teaching, community engagement, advocacy, entrepreneurship, and leadership. It offers top-quality performance opportunities, intensive professional development, and the opportunity to partner throughout the fellowship with a New York City public school.
2016–2017 Performance Highlights
A new group of musicians join the Ensemble ACJW fellowship program at the start of the 2016–2017 season, kicking off ACJW’s 10th anniversary season with a performance of Hans Zender’s orchestration of Schubert’s Winterreise with tenor Mark Padmore and conductor Sir Simon Rattle. They present several engaging performances at Carnegie Hall, The Juilliard School, and other New York City venues throughout the season. Music heard at Ensemble ACJW’s four Carnegie Hall concerts include works by Schubert, David Bruce, Shostakovich, and Copland and the New York premiere of a new work by Caroline Shaw (who joins the ensemble on Baroque violin for the concert), commissioned as part of ACJW’s Arthur Zankel Music Center, presenting concerts that include the world premiere of a Carnegie Hall–commissioned piece by Caroline Shaw. In addition, the fellows offer collaborative demonstrations and informal performances beyond the music department in classes, dormitories, and libraries, as well as in schools and other community venues in the Saratoga Springs area.

Community Work in New York City
Throughout the season, fellows participate in community-based performances at multiple non-traditional venues across New York City through Musical Connections, a program of Carnegie Hall’s Weill Music Institute. This program is designed to bring live music to people coping with challenging circumstances in healthcare settings, correctional facilities, senior care facilities, as well as for special needs populations and those without access to live music. Fellows also perform several times per year as part of the Weill Music Institute’s free Neighborhood Concerts.

Skidmore College Residency
For the 10th consecutive year, Ensemble ACJW returns to Saratoga Springs, New York, for two five-day residencies at Skidmore College. During this residency, the fellows engage with Skidmore College students, as well as the broader Saratoga Springs community. While on campus, they work with music department faculty and students, offering master classes, lessons, and classroom demonstrations. The fellows also play side by side with the students of the Skidmore College Orchestra and read student composers’ new works. Ensemble ACJW performs in the Arthur Zankel Music Center, presenting concerts that include the world premiere of a Carnegie Hall–commissioned piece by Caroline Shaw. In addition, they offer collaborative demonstrations and informal performances beyond the music department in classes, dormitories, and libraries, as well as in schools and other community venues in the Saratoga Springs area.

Professional Development
Throughout the two-year program, Ensemble ACJW fellows participate in rigorous, ongoing professional development to ensure that they gain the necessary skills to be successful in all areas of the program and to become leaders in their field. Areas of emphasis include artistic excellence, engagement strategies both on and off the stage (including interactive performances), advocacy, professional skills, and preparation for their work in the schools. Sessions are led by experts in the performing arts, professional teaching artists, and Ensemble ACJW alumni. Coaching sessions are also provided to fellows, as well as the opportunity to work with composers whose works they are performing, such as Thomas Adès, John Adams, David Lang, Meredith Monk, and Steve Reich.

Ten Years of Ensemble ACJW
Over the past 10 years, Carnegie Hall has maintained close relationships with the program’s 101 alumni. As the reputation of Ensemble ACJW has grown, demand for work by its alumni has developed as well. In 2011, Decoda—an ensemble exclusively made up of Ensemble ACJW alumni—was formed and later named an affiliate ensemble of Carnegie Hall.

Ensemble ACJW by the Numbers
- 18 new fellows, beginning in 2016–2017
- 101 alumni
- 70 New York City public school partners
- 70 New York City public school partner music teachers
- More than 50,000 New York City public school students served
- Ensemble ACJW has premiered 17 new works by composers who include Samuel Adams, David Bruce, Missy Mazzoli, Meredith Monk, and Sleeping Giant.
- Ensemble ACJW alumni currently participate in more than 90 performing ensembles in the US and around the world, including the New York Philharmonic, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Orchestra of St. Luke’s, St. Lawrence String Quartet, The Knights, Canadian Brass, Bryant Park Quartet, International Contemporary Ensemble, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and more.

“After being part of ACJW, I felt that anything I wanted music to do could be done.”
—Nathan Schram, Ensemble ACJW Alum

“...at the highest level. It makes me very optimistic about the future of music here, when you have these people who also have realized that they have to be evangelists, not high priests. So they must give out of themselves because otherwise the art form is going to die.”
—Sir Simon Rattle
About Ensemble ACJW

Called “a valuable part of New York’s musical fabric” by The New York Times, Ensemble ACJW is made up of some of the finest young professional classical musicians in the United States who are taking part in a two-year fellowship program created in 2007 by Carnegie Hall, The Juilliard School, and the Weill Music Institute in partnership with the New York City Department of Education. The program prepares fellows for careers that combine musical excellence with teaching, community engagement, advocacy, entrepreneurship, and leadership by offering them top-quality performance opportunities, intensive professional development, and the opportunity to partner throughout the fellowship with a New York City public school.

As performers on the concert stage and in their work in schools and communities, musicians of Ensemble ACJW have earned accolades from critics and audiences alike for the quality of their concerts, their fresh and open-minded approach to programming, and their ability to actively engage any audience.

Exemplary performers, dedicated teachers, and advocates for music throughout the community, the forward-looking musicians of Ensemble ACJW are redefining what it means to be a musician in the 21st century.