Ensemble Connect is a two-year fellowship program for extraordinary young professional classical musicians residing in the US that prepares them for careers that combine musical excellence with teaching, community engagement, advocacy, entrepreneurship, and leadership. It offers top-quality performance opportunities, intensive professional development, and partnerships throughout the fellowship with New York City public schools.
2019–2020 Performance Highlights

The musicians of Ensemble Connect continue into the second year of their fellowship during the 2019–2020 season, kicking off the ensemble’s 13th season with a performance in Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall in October. In addition to performances at Carnegie Hall, Ensemble Connect presents engaging programs at The Juilliard School—including a Partner School Performance Festival that features more than 400 public school students performing together with Ensemble Connect fellows—and other New York City venues throughout the season, and continues its biannual residency at Skidmore College. This season, Ensemble Connect gives the world premiere performance of a new commission by TJ Cole, and also performs Oktett by Jörg Widmann—this season’s holder of the Richard and Barbara Debs Composer’s Chair at Carnegie Hall—along with additional works by Jennifer Higdon, Tania León, Shulamit Ran, Bach, Brahms, Mozart, and more.

“Ensemble Connect consists of brilliant and sensitive young musicians who get to the essence of each piece of music that they play and make it their own. Their spirit of adventure is inspiring for the future of new music.”
—Meredith Monk

Partnership with New York City Public Schools

Ensemble Connect’s in-school residencies represent one of the largest and most in-depth collaborations between a cultural institution and New York City public schools. Each Ensemble Connect fellow is partnered with a public school instrumental music teacher for a 25-day residency over the course of each year, strengthening students’ music skills through a creativity-rich approach. The fellows’ two-year public school partnerships culminate with a Partner School Performance Festival in The Juilliard School’s Peter Jay Sharp Theater, with more than 400 students participating in this celebratory event.

Interactive Performances in Schools and Community Venues

Each year, Ensemble Connect presents 80 interactive performances in schools and 20 in community venues across New York City. Interactive performances are designed to invite audiences to explore and discover a piece of music or musical concept, and include listening activities aimed at deepening and enriching the concert experience. Fellows give these assembly-style interactive performances for large, school-wide audiences, and also adapt them for community venues that include correctional facilities, senior-care centers, homeless shelters, and organizations working with special-needs populations.

Interactive Performance at Queensboro Correctional Facility

Meredith Monk with Ensemble Connect Fellows

Skidmore College Residency

For the 13th consecutive year, Ensemble Connect returns to Saratoga Springs, New York, for two five-day residencies at Skidmore College. During these residencies, the fellows engage with Skidmore College students—as well as the broader Saratoga Springs community—offering master classes, lessons, class demonstrations, and interactive performances, culminating in a performance in Helen Filene Ladd Concert Hall.
Professional Development

Ensemble Connect fellows are supported by a rigorous weekly professional development curriculum aimed at ensuring they have the skills they need to succeed in all areas of the program and to shape purposeful, personally rewarding career paths that redefine the role of the 21st-century musician. Sessions are led by experts in the performing arts, arts education, and by Ensemble Connect alumni.

“I believe this program will prove to be invaluable in helping me become the musician, teacher, and artist I wish to be.”
—Noémi Sallai, Current Fellow (clarinet)

Ensemble Connect Alumni

Throughout the 12 years since Ensemble Connect was established, Carnegie Hall has maintained close relationships with the program’s alumni. As the reputation of this group has grown, demand for work by its now 119 alumni has developed as well. In 2011, Decoda—an ensemble exclusively made up of Ensemble Connect alumni—was formed and later named an affiliate ensemble of Carnegie Hall. Carnegie Hall presented Decoda for the first time in concert for two performances in Weill Recital Hall during the 2018–2019 season, and will again feature the ensemble in two concerts in 2019–2020. In addition, alumni are at the forefront of initiatives that use their art form to impact a variety of audiences around the world; examples include Notes with a Purpose in Las Vegas, Musicambia in New York, New Docta International Music Festival in Argentina, Scrag Mountain Music in Vermont, and Reveler in California. Many alumni also hold faculty and guest artist teaching positions at US universities and colleges.

Commissions and World Premieres

Supporting its commitment to providing fellows with exceptional opportunities to work with contemporary music, composers, and artists, Carnegie Hall has commissioned 27 composers on behalf of Ensemble Connect since 2007. Ensemble Connect fellows have worked closely with these composers during the creative process to present a total of 33 world premiere performances of works by Samuel Adams, Andy Akiho, Timo Andres, David Bruce, Ted Hearne, Gabriel Kahane, Missy Mazzoli, Meredith Monk, Caroline Shaw, Gabriella Smith, and more. In the 2019–2020 season, Ensemble Connect commissions a new work by composer TJ Cole.
About Ensemble Connect

Ensemble Connect is made up of extraordinary young professional classical musicians residing in the US who take 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 top-quality performance opportunities, intensive professional development, and partnerships throughout the fellowship with New York City public schools.

On the concert stage and in schools and communities, Ensemble Connect has earned accolades from critics and audiences alike for the quality of the concerts, the fresh and open-minded approach to programming, and the ability to actively engage any audience.

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

ensembleconnect.org

Ensemble Connect is a program of Carnegie Hall, The Juilliard School, and the Weill Music Institute in partnership with the New York City Department of Education.


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