

POB Orchestra Students Take Part in Unique Music Residency

World-Renowned Electric Violinist Mark Wood Guides Students Through Electrifying Week of Learning and Performance

PLAINVIEW, NEW YORK (February, 2025)—Orchestra students from Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School (POBJFKHS) and both Howard B. Mattlin and Plainview-Old Bethpage middle schools recently participated in a residency with Mark Wood, the original string master of the Trans-Siberian Orchestra and a world-renowned electric violinist. The residency, part of Wood's Electrify Your Symphony program, took place during the week of February 3rd and culminated in a rock-and-roll orchestra concert on Friday, February 7th, at the Plainview-Old Bethpage Middle School auditorium.

Mark Wood's Electrify Your Symphony program has worked with student musicians across the country for 25 years, challenging them to develop 21st-century musical skills while fostering emotional engagement and self-expression. This unique residency was tailored specifically for POB students.

The week-long program featured daily rehearsals for high school students with Mark Wood, as well as performance assemblies for seventh and eighth-grade orchestra students at the middle schools, led by POBJFKHS orchestra members and Wood himself. Additionally, members of Wood's band conducted specialized workshops: vocalist Laura Kaye coached a cappella ensembles, guitarist Rob Bambach worked with guitar students, and drummer Jason Gianni led rhythm workshops.

The residency culminated in a concert that combined POB string students in grades 7 through 12—including POBJFKHS's electric orchestra, which had recently performed at the state music education conference in Rochester—with the world-class musicians of the Mark Wood Experience. This year's event packed the POBMS auditorium with an enthusiastic crowd.

"This residency was an incredible opportunity for our students to work with one of the most innovative musicians in the world," said Mr. Dustin Bartley, POBJFKHS orchestra teacher. "Mark Wood's program pushed our students to explore new dimensions of music and performance, and we were thrilled to share the results with the community at the concert."

For more information about the Plainview-Old Bethpage Central School District, please visit the District's website at www.pobschools.org. Exciting activities happening throughout the District and programs celebrating student achievement can also be found on the District's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pobschools/>.



POB orchestra students took part in a weeklong music residency led by renowned electric violinist Mark Wood, center, which culminated in a concert at Plainview-Old Bethpage Middle School.



The students performed alongside the world-class musicians of the Mark Wood Experience.



The residency gave the POB students the opportunity to widen their musical horizons.