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Photo attached separately.

FILE NAMES: Stephen Costanza at Colonial Monday June 6
CAPTION: Stephen Costanza presented the King of Ragtime in a school program at the Colonial Theatre.
CREDIT: Kyle Walton

King of Ragtime Programs Spotlight the Power of Community Collaboration

BELFAST – At the beginning of June, Belfast Flying Shoes brought Stephen Costanza and five other musicians from North Haven to the Colonial Theatre for three programs connected to Costanza's award-winning biography of Scott Joplin. When the stage lights dimmed in Dreamland after the third show, it was clear that this collaborative effort of multiple community partners and talented performers was a rousing success.

Belfast Flying Shoes co-founder and former board member, Annadeene K. Fowler first explored the idea with BFS Director Chrissy Fowler and Steve Costanza. They quickly garnered the enthusiastic support of Kyle Walton, Operations Manager at the Colonial Theatre, and Stephanie Holman, Youth Services Librarian at the Belfast Free Library. With the additional support of Therese Bagnardi & Mike Hurley, the owners of the Colonial, Walton pulled together all of the necessary technology, while Holman and Director Steve Norman affirmed the Library's commitment to the project. Left Bank Books co-owners, Tiffany Howard and Julia Clapp, hosted a book signing in the lower lobby after the public program on Sunday, and the administrators and teachers at Nickerson, Ames, and Captain Albert Stevens Schools brought nearly 300 students to the Colonial on Monday. Those school programs were offered to the local district free of charge, thanks to funding from Belfast Flying Shoes supporters, the Belfast

Free Library, and program sponsors, First National Bank and First National Wealth Management. Three First National bankers even helped usher!

BFS Director, Chrissy Fowler, recently reflected, “Community participation has always been central to Flying Shoes programs, but I am in awe of how these diverse organizations and businesses came together. Watching Steve in action – playing his favorite rags as small children danced in the aisle, illustrating how Ragtime fused diverse musical traditions, sharing historical perspectives about Scott Joplin’s life as a Black artist in the Jim Crow era, and entralling preteens with his message that imagination helps us explore creative ideas that are as varied and bountiful as the marine life in Penobscot Bay – in a venue that opened in 1912 at the height of Ragtime’s popularity... Wow! Pure magic!”

A tip of the hat to performers Stephen Costanza, Alden Mills, Rita Brown, Maria Keeler, Edith Gawler, and Zeb Campbell; Lincoln Clapp and John Pranio for help with sound; Stephanie Holman for emceeing and ushering; Thomas Fowler, PE for logistical support and refreshments; Kyle Walton for getting everything in place at the Colonial; the program partners, sponsors, and generous funders; and the appreciative audience members of all ages.

