

# BUD, NOT BUDDY



EDUCATOR'S  
GUIDE



A Concert Play based on the Newbery Medal-winning novel by  
**CHRISTOPHER PAUL CURTIS**

Adapted by Obie award winning author  
**KIRSTEN GREENIDGE**

Original Score by five-time Grammy winning Jazz artist  
**TERENCE BLANCHARD**

Produced in Partnership  
with JAZZ ST. LOUIS

Commissioned by  
THE KENNEDY CENTER

Sponsored by  
KEN AND NANCY KRANZBERG



# Getting Ready to See *Bud, Not Buddy*

## ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Welcome to a brand new performance of the story *Bud, Not Buddy*—as a play within a jazz concert. Live music was a popular form of entertainment in the 1930s, when our hero Bud was growing up and about to fall in love with music himself. So it's an especially fitting way to bring Bud's story to life on stage.

## BUD AND HIS STORY

Ten-year-old Bud Caldwell is “one of the best liars in the world” and let's be very clear, his name is Bud, not Buddy. His lying skills and memories of his momma, who died when he was six, help him get by. In 1936, Bud's life is full of challenges, including the Great Depression, racism, and the uncertainty of not having a family or home. But when we first meet this young African American boy, he has somehow found his way from Flint to Grand Rapids, Michigan, and to the man he believes to be his father. Bud's got nothing more than a tattered suitcase of prized possessions, a pocketknife, and his courage, humor, rules, and determination. The question is: Is he about to find a better life?

“BUD IS YOUR  
NAME AND  
DON'T EVER LET  
ANYONE CALL  
YOU BUDDY.”

—*Momma*

## MEET THE CHARACTERS

**Bud Caldwell**

**Momma**

**Jerry Clark**, a boy at the “home”

**Todd Amos**, a bully

**Mr. and Mrs. Amos**, foster parents

**Librarian**

**Bugs**, Bud's friend

**Lefty Lewis**, a stranger who helps Bud

**Herman E. Calloway**, bandleader and bass player

**Doug “the Thug” Tennant**, drum player

**Chug “Doo-Doo Bug” Cross**, trombone player

**Jimmy Wesley**, horn player

**Harrison “Steady Eddy” Patrick**, saxophone player

**Roy “Dirty Deed” Reed**, piano player

**Miss Thomas**, singer

Plus, a caseworker, the mission's line keeper, and Bud's pretend family



## RULES TO LIVE BY

Bud creates a bunch of rules called “Bud Caldwell’s Rules and Things for Having a Funner Life and Making a Better Liar Out of Yourself.” They help him remember things like keeping his lies short and easy to remember...and also understand things like when adults say someone has “gone” or “passed,” they really mean “dead.” During the performance, listen for Bud’s rules and why you think he develops them. Afterward, brainstorm three rules for your own life, and share them with friends or family.

## THE GREAT DEPRESSION (1929-39)

When we meet Bud, America is in the middle of the Great Depression. During these economic hard times, banks closed, businesses failed, and about one out of four workers were unemployed. Many people could not afford food or a place to live. The Depression hurt nearly all Americans but especially African Americans, who also faced racism and discrimination that limited where they could live and what they could do. Here are some facts about the times that come up during Bud’s story:



**During the Great Depression, hungry, jobless people waited in line for a meal of hot soup, bread, and coffee.**

- **Meal centers**, hosted by religious organizations (like what Bud calls “the mission”) and community groups, served free hot food to poor people.
- **Riding the rails** refers to illegally jumping on trains to try to reach places to find work, like picking fruit.
- **The New Deal** was a series of programs enacted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to ease suffering and repair the economy. These policies were just starting to take effect in 1936 when the play takes place.
- **Labor unions** are groups of workers who act together to demand better pay and treatment. Business owners and others feared unions and spied on and threatened members.



# Behind the Story

## IMAGINING BUD'S STORY

The story is adapted (turned into a play to be acted out on the stage) from the best-selling book *Bud, Not Buddy* by author Christopher Paul Curtis. His award-winning writing for young people often focuses on family as well as on stories told in historical contexts like the Depression and the Civil Rights Movement. His inspiration for Bud's story came from his own experiences growing up and working in an automobile factory in Flint, Michigan, as well as from his own grandfathers—big band leader Herman E. Curtis and baseball pitcher Earl “Lefty” Lewis. Curtis once said, “One of the most enjoyable parts of writing is that an author can combine his or her imagination with the traits of real people to build new characters.”

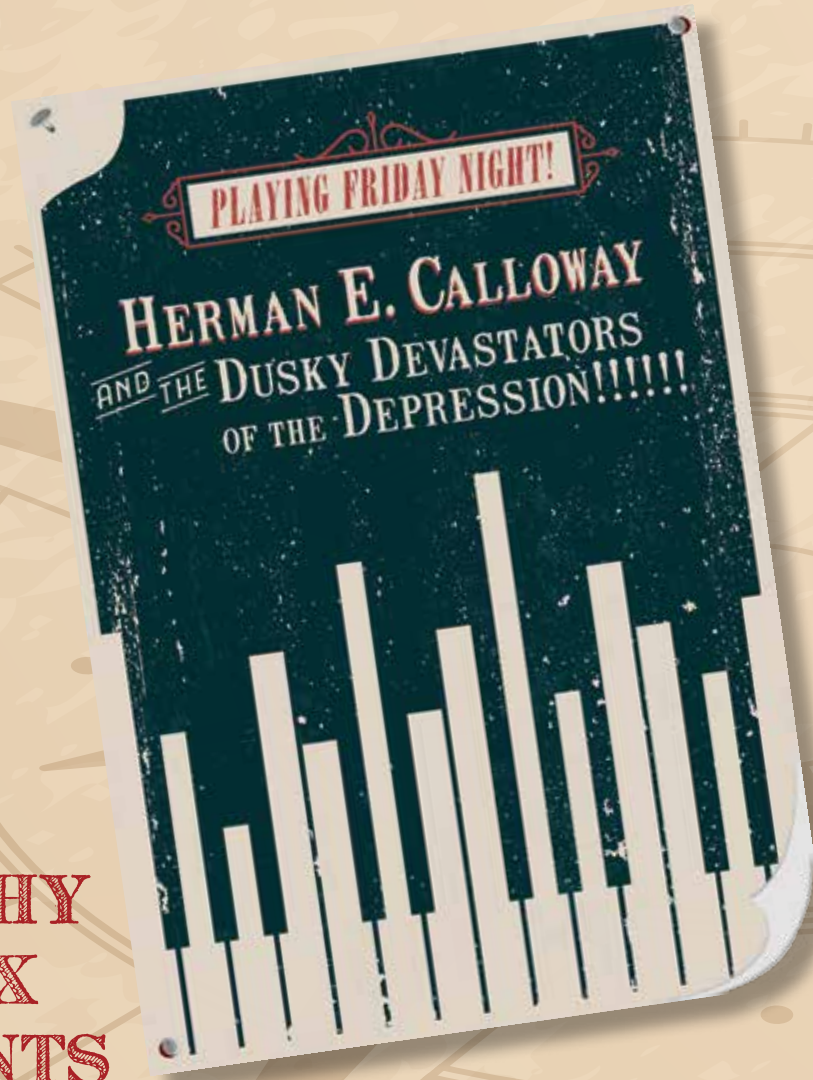
## GIVING THE STORY GREATER MEANING

Writers use techniques called literary devices to help enliven their storytelling. One technique Christopher Paul Curtis uses is narration, or telling the story from Bud's perspective to let us see the world through his eyes and thoughts. Curtis also uses flashbacks to give background, such as when Bud recalls his Momma's relaying a story. And listen for metaphors, which describe something by comparing it to something else, such as how Bud compares an idea or inspiration to the seeds of a maple tree, and how Bud imagines opportunities as one door closing and another opening.

“I CAN SEE NOW WHY THIS BAND HAS SIX EXCLAMATION POINTS BEHIND ITS NAME.” —Bud

## FROM PAGE TO STAGE

The challenge of turning the book into a play to be performed on stage fell to playwright Kirsten Greenidge, who worked closely with composer Terence Blanchard. She changed the story so more of it was told through flashbacks (in which Bud describes events that happened earlier that help us better understand the current situation). She also had to leave out a few characters and scenes and make other parts shorter. But if you've read the book, you'll notice the play keeps most of the major turning points and big ideas.



## A TALE SET IN HISTORY

*Bud, Not Buddy* is a type of story known as historical fiction, because although the story and characters are made up, the tale takes place in the past and references actual events (like the Depression) and happenings (such as food lines). Historical novels also include details and manners of the time period. For example, in the story, Bud waits in line for a free hot meal, something many people had to do during the Depression. Bud also respectfully says “sir” and “ma’am,” which was commonly taught. Also notice that African Americans were referred to as Negroes in the United States up until the 1950s.

## WHAT’S THE BIG IDEA?

The story explores some big ideas, or themes. They include family, home, racism, hope, and perseverance. During the performance, watch how these themes play out. For example, think about how the theme of family comes up for Bud and Herman Calloway’s band—as well as in acts of kindness by strangers.

## WORDS OF THE DAY

Here are a few words or phrases to know from the story:

- on the lam—running away or escaping
- orphanage—institutions that take care of children whose parents have died or can’t be found
- foster home—a temporary home for children without families
- ax—what jazz musicians call their instruments
- recorder—flute
- embouchure (pronounced AHM-boo-shoor)—the way wind instrument players shape their lips to blow into the mouthpiece
- copacetic (koh-puh-SET-ik)—okay or fine

## CURTIS’S RULES FOR BEING A BETTER WRITER

Like his character Bud, author Christopher Paul Curtis once said in an interview that he has some rules, too—but his are for new writers:

- write every day,
- have fun with your writing,
- be patient with yourself,
- once you’ve learned how to write, ignore all rules and create your own style!



Thousands of people including more than 250,000 teenagers “rode the rails” during the 1930s in search of a better life.

# Bringing Bud's World to Life on Stage

## MAKING IT REAL

Telling Bud's story with music before a live audience takes some imagination and skill from a whole team of creative people—the director (the person overseeing the whole production); the composer (person who writes music); the playwright; the actors; the musicians; and the set, costume, and lighting designers. Here are some of the tools they might use while designing the show:

- **Set Design**—backdrops and structures that give the feel of the 1930s
- **Lighting**—bright, dim, and colorful lighting to help you follow the story
- **Sound**—in addition to music, sound effects performed by the actors and the band to help you imagine the action
- **Costumes**—clothes that people would wear in the 1930s that are easily enhanced with pieces like jackets, glasses, and hats to create different characters

## MANY WAYS TO TELL A STORY

In the play, Bud narrates the story, at times speaking directly to the audience as well as performing parts of it. Sometimes other actors speak Bud's thoughts about what is happening. The music helps tell the story, too, by giving the sounds of the time and by changing tempos and styles to help tell you the mood. All this, along with a little help from your imagination, helps Bud's story come to life.

## THE SET UP

The set, or the scenery you see on stage, gives a sense of where the story takes place—like the Log Cabin, Calloway Station, and the “home.” For this performance, the set designer had to create scenery that could represent the tough times of the Great Depression in Michigan and easily and quickly become different places in the story.

## DOUBLE TIME

Eight actors play more than 20 characters. Yep, that's a lot. However, the magic of theatrical storytelling and great acting is that you won't even notice. But you might want to pay attention to how a skilled actor uses a simple costume change—like a hat—and a change in posture, movement, and speaking style to become a completely different character right before your eyes. When actors play more than one character, it is called doubling. This makes it easier for small groups to perform stories with many characters and also gives the performance lots of energy.

## JAZZ TIME

Jazz bands like Herman E. Calloway's, mostly made up of African Americans, were especially popular during the 1920s and 30s. Jazz is a uniquely American form of music that started in the early 1900s. It fused African American musical traditions such as the blues (which evolved from African American spirituals and work songs and features flatted notes called “blue notes”) with European-influenced traditions like big brass bands.

To create the musical sounds of Bud's story, a live 13-piece band will be on stage performing original music written by award-winning jazz artist Terence Blanchard.

## MEET TERENCE

Even if you don't know jazz music very well, you've probably heard music Terence Blanchard has performed or written. He plays trumpet, leads bands, composes music, and has even written music to go with films. His trumpet playing can be heard in many movies, including the 2009 film *The Princess and the Frog*. Blanchard composed all the music in *Bud, Not Buddy*.

## IN THE BAND

Trumpet	Flute	Piano	Jazz
Trombone	Oboe	Bass	Saxophone
Tuba	Clarinet Bass	Guitar	Drums
French Horn	Clarinet		

# Classroom Activities

## SOUNDSCAPE

Music and sound play a critical role in *Bud, Not Buddy*. Discuss with students the musical elements and sound effects they remember from the play. Invite students to bring an environment to life using their voices and imaginations. Example environments: the beach, playground, classroom, use a photograph to inspire a soundscape! Ask students to sit in a circle and let them know that you are going to conduct them like an orchestra to bring an environment to life through sound. Model some example sounds for students (ex: clapping hands, blowing wind, rushing water, etc.). The facilitator will point to a student and they will know that it is their turn to add in a sound. One at a time, students will add a sound to the soundscape and commit to their sound throughout the activity. Select hand cues to represent louder, softer and stop. Reflect with students on what the experience was like. What sounds stood out? What sounds were surprising?

### NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARD:

**ANCHOR STANDARD 1:** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

**ANCHOR STANDARD 7:** Perceive and analyze artistic work.

### MISSOURI COMMUNICATION ARTS GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

**LS1B K-8** Demonstrate listening behaviors

## TOUR OF A PLACE

Bud has lived in many different places on his journey to find Herman Calloway. The idea of “home” can mean many different things. Home might be the place you live with your family and/or caregivers, a place you feel safe or a place you visit in your imagination. Give the class a short demonstration of a tour of your “home” using the entire room as if you are truly there, with lots of detail and stories/memories. Identify a student to be your partner on this tour. Your partner may ask questions, but may not comment or judge.

- Have students find a partner they do not know well and has not been to their home. Give 3-5 minutes for each tour, then switch.
  - What was it like giving a tour? What was it like taking a tour?
  - Did anyone give a tour of a place that just felt like home? Does anybody want to share?
  - What does it mean for a place to feel like home?

### NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARD:

**ANCHOR STANDARD 2:** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

**ANCHOR STANDARD 6:** Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

### MISSOURI COMMUNICATION ARTS GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

**LS1B K-8** Demonstrate listening behaviors

**LS2A K-8** Share ideas or experiences verbally or using communication systems



“...ALWAYS REMEMBER,  
NO MATTER HOW BAD  
THINGS LOOK TO YOU,  
WHEN ONE DOOR  
CLOSES, ANOTHER  
DOOR OPENS.”

—Momma

# A Few More Things

## WATCH FOR...

- how the tough times of the Depression are shown on stage.
- how lighting and other visual elements help you know a part of the story is a flashback.
- how rocks become an important clue.

## LISTEN FOR...

- the humor and teasing among the band members and what it says about their friendship as well as what it reveals about the racism of the time.
- how both the words and the music convey the time, place, actions, and feelings of the story.
- musical melodies, or themes, that repeat through the performance.
- funny moments in the story, such as how Bud jumps to a conclusion (making a decision without having all the facts) about Lefty Lewis.

“MY EYES DON’T  
CRY NO MORE.”

—Bud

## THINK ABOUT...

- why Momma named her son Bud and whether the name fit. Why do you think Bud was happy to get a nickname from the band?
- how the Great Depression shaped American history; choose a topic (such as riding the rails or jazz music) to research further.
- why Herman E. Calloway always had at least one white band member.
- what Momma’s saying, “when one door closes, another one opens” means. Have you experienced this in your own life?
- *Bud, Not Buddy* author Christopher Paul Curtis once said his favorite scene in the book was when the family in the food line helped Bud—why do you think that was so? What was your favorite scene in the play?

## COMPARE...

Read the book *Bud, Not Buddy* (if you haven’t already). Compare and contrast how the story was told between the book and the play. Discuss why you think the playwright made the changes she did. Which version do you like better, and why?



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2017/2018 SEASON [metroplays.org](http://metroplays.org)

### MISSION

Inspired by the intelligence and emotional wisdom of young people, we create professional theater, foster inclusive community and nurture meaningful learning through the arts.



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