The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Announces the World Premiere of

BUD, NOT BUDDY

Written by Kirsten Greenidge
Music by Terence Blanchard
Directed by Clarke Peters
Adapted from the novel by Christopher Paul Curtis

Thursday, January 12 through Sunday, January 15, 2017
in the Eisenhower Theater

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts presents the world premiere of Bud, Not Buddy, a new play by Obie Award winner Kirsten Greenidge, adapted from Christopher Paul Curtis’s acclaimed Newbury Medal-winning novel, with music by world-renowned jazz artist Terence Blanchard. This performance is most enjoyed by patrons age nine and up.

Set in Flint, Michigan in 1936, Bud, Not Buddy tells the story of Bud, a ten-year old who is sure about two things: he wants to find his father and he is not called Buddy. With only one clue, a flyer advertising Herman E. Calloway and his band, and his trusty suitcase in tow, Bud sets off on an epic journey of discovery, set to the soulful sounds of jazz. The theme of
courage reflected in Bud’s adventure is an ideal frequently ascribed to President John F. Kennedy and is among the five ideals the Kennedy Center is exploring during JFKC: A Centennial Celebration of John F. Kennedy, a programming initiative showcasing works like Bud, Not Buddy that embody the spirit of President Kennedy’s vision for America.

With direction by Clarke Peters (HBO’s The Wire and Treme), this touching new play which incorporates a large on-stage jazz ensemble to perform Blanchard’s score is part radio play, part jazz concert, and all heart.

About Kristen Greenidge
Kirsten Greenidge is the author of Milk Like Sugar, The Luck of the Irish, and Baltimore. Her work has appeared as part of the BIRTH! Festival at the Royal Exchange, Bad Habit Productions, Mosaic Theatre, The Huntington Theatre Company, LCT3, La Jolla Playhouse, Playwrights Horizons and CompanyOne Theatre. Greenidge has been fortunate enough to develop her plays at Kenyon Playwright’s Conference, Huntington Playwrighting Fellows Theatre Lab, Denver Center, The O’Neill, Sundance Theatre Lab, Sundance at Ucross, A.S.K., Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Cardinal Stages, and Pacific Playwright’s Festival. She is currently working on commissions from Cleveland Playhouse, The Huntington, Oregon Shakespeare Festival/American Revolutions, Playwrights Horizons, The Goodman, and La Jolla Playhouse. Her work has received a Lucille Lortell nomination, two Independent Reviewers of New England Awards, a San Diego Critics Award, two TCG/Edgerton Awards, a PEN/America Award, as well as an Obie from the Village Voice. She is the 2016 recipient of Cleveland Playhouse’s Roe Green Award for her play Little Row Boat and is a current Mellon Fellow/Resident Playwright at CompanyOne in Boston. An alumna of New Dramatists, Greenidge attended Wesleyan University and the Playwright’s Workshop at the University of Iowa. She oversees the playwriting course of study at Boston University’s School of Theater.

About Terence Blanchard
Terence Blanchard made a name for himself as a top-tier jazz trumpeter who has gone on to enjoy a multifaceted career both in the jazz camp and beyond. He is not only a four-time Grammy Award winner, but he has also established himself as one of the most influential jazz musicians and film score masters of his generation, a member of a jazz legacy that has shaped the contours of modern jazz today. With more than 30 albums to his credit, as a musician Blanchard is a multi-grammy Award winner and nominee. As a film composer, Blanchard has more than 50 scores to his credit, most recently, Kevin Costner’s Black or White. He received a Golden Globe nomination for Spike Lee’s 25th Hour. Other film music written by Blanchard include Oprah Winfrey’s Their Eyes Were Watching God, Tim Story’s Barbershop, and George Lucas’s Red Tails. Add to those achievements Blanchard’s recent success composing for Broadway (Stephen Adly Guirgis’s The Motherf**ker With the Hat and the Emily Mann-directed Broadway revival of A Streetcar Named Desire); his first opera commissioned by Opera St. Louis, Champion, featured in the Washington National Opera 2016-17 season; a speaking role as the musical voice of Louis the Alligator in the Disney-animated feature The Princess and the Frog; becoming the artistic director of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra’s jazz series; and after serving as the artistic director of the prestigious Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz for a decade since 2000, being named in 2015 artist in residence at the Berklee College of Music in Boston where Blanchard works with students in the areas of artistic development, arranging, and composition. He also participates in master classes around the world as well as local community outreach activities in his beloved hometown of New Orleans.
About Clarke Peters
Clarke Peters has a long-established and wide-ranging career in theater, television and film. As a Royal National player he has appeared in Guys & Dolls, Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, and Mourning Becomes Electra. His many stage credits also include: King Lear (Shakespeare in the Park), David Mamet’s Race, Chicago, The Iceman Cometh in New York and in London, Porgy in Porgy and Bess, Driving Miss Daisy, Kiss of the Spiderwoman, Little Shop of Horrors, Blues in the Night, and the hit jazz musical Five Guys Named Moe, also written by Clarke. Other theatre includes Othello at the Sheffield Crucible, also the home of his directing debut of Blues for Mr. Charlie, followed by King, the Musical in the West End. Clarke’s films include Spike Lee’s Red Hook Summer, Notting Hill, Mona Lisa, Bad Education, Marley and Me, Freedomland, The Benefactor, Endgame, Mandela: The Prison Years and Nativity! He is also well-known for his varied and popular television career which includes, amongst numerous performances, regular appearances in The Wire, Tremé, Jericho, The Divide, Chance, and The Corner. He has also gueststared in Jonathan Creek, Holby City, Underground, Show Me a Hero, Midsomer Murders, Death in Paradise, True Detective, Memphis Beat, London Spy, Damages, Life on Mars, Law and Order: Trial by Jury, and Person of Interest. Clarke is currently developing a documentary on the history of Tap for the BBC.

About Christopher Paul Curtis
Christopher Paul Curtis is the author of nine books for young people including Bud, Not Buddy, The Mighty Miss Malone, Elijah of Buxton, and The Watsons Go To Birmingham-1963. He is originally from Flint, Michigan where he worked for 13 years at the historic Flint Fisher Body Number One plant. His job was to hang doors on the big Buicks. This has left him permanently adverse to entering large cars. Curtis currently lives in Windsor, Ontario with his wife Habon and their three children: Ayaan, Ebyaan and Libaan. His next two books will be based in his hometown of Flint, a city that has largely informed his writing career.

About JFKC: A Centennial Celebration of John F. Kennedy
In the year leading up to the centennial of John F. Kennedy’s birth on May 29, 2017, the Kennedy Center, the living memorial to President John F. Kennedy, is re-imagining the very mission of the institution created in his name. Inspired by some of the key ideals he championed—Courage, Freedom, Justice, Service, and Gratitude—the Center is featuring special programming through the year that explores, challenges, and reflects the contemporary spirit of America. Guided by JFK’s legacy of idealism, hope, and empowerment, the Kennedy Center will serve as a creative catalyst and meeting place, inviting members of the public to engage directly with artists and ideas, and actively participate in the civic and cultural life of their country.

About Education At the Kennedy Center
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is the national champion for arts learning and creativity. Committed to increasing opportunities for all people to participate in, learn about, and understand the arts, Education at the Kennedy Center offers programs and events that strive to reflect the nation and communities and that are accessible and inclusive for all. From performances and exhibits on the Center’s stages and in the community, to classroom and community partnerships, including the recent addition of the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities Turnaround Arts initiative, to online resources accessible nearly anywhere, the Center serves the burgeoning artist, the exploring student of any age, the teacher and teaching artist, and even the local and national infrastructure—any person interested in arts learning and utilizing the arts for positive change. As an essential component of the living memorial to President Kennedy, the Center’s Education utilizes the arts to embrace the ideals of service, justice, freedom, courage, and gratitude, and to activate and support the Citizen Artists in all our audiences. For more information, please visit kenneycnter.org/education/.

Ticket Information
Bud, Not Buddy will be performed from January 12 through January 15, 2017. Tickets for the performance begin at $20 and are currently on sale. For more information please visit the Kennedy Center website, in-person at the Kennedy Center box office, or call (202) 467-4600 or (800) 444-1324.

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