Dahlia Harris’
God’s Way
OPENING NIGHT APRIL 7, 2022

braata productions AT THE Jamaica Performing Arts Center

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
KARL O’BRIAN WILLIAMS

PRESENTS

GOD’S WAY

BY
DAHLIA HARRIS

*MITZIE MARSHA-ANN JERRY EPIPHANY RUSHELL PRATT HAY BENZWICK SAMUELS MALCOLM

*The Actor appears through the courtesy of Actors’ Equity Association

SCENIC DESIGN
HARLAN PENN

ASST. SCENIC DESIGN
CHRISTOPHER BELLO

LIGHTING DESIGNER
MONEE STAMP

COSTUME DESIGNER
JOHNELI DACOSTA

SOUND DESIGN
ANDREW CLARKE & JOEL EDWARDS

PROP & COSTUME MISTRESS
NICOLA JOHNSON

STAGE MANAGER
MOLLIE FRANKEL

PRODUCTION MANAGER
KARL O’BRIAN WILLIAMS

DIRECTED BY
KEenan N Charles

PRESS REPRESENTATIVE
JONATHAN SLAFF & ASSOCIATES

SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL MARKETING CONSULTANT
KAREN JEANNE RADLEY


Support for God’s Way is provided by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature. This program is also supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, New York City Council Member James Gennaro with additional support from the Howard Gilman Foundation and the Coalition for Theatres of Color.
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WWW.BRAATAPRODUCTIONS.ORG/SHOP
CAST

(in order of appearance)

Valerie White ......................................................... MARSHA-ANN HAY
Deacon Russell .......................................................... JERRY BENZWICK
Samantha McIntosh .................................................. MITZIE PRATT
Georgia White .................. EPIPHANY SAMUELS / RUSHELL MALCOLM

PLACE: Kingston Jamaica W.I.
TIME: Present day

THERE WILL BE A 15 MINUTE INTERMISSION

Assistant Stage Manager ........................................... Candice Segarra
Assistant Scenic Design ............................................ Christopher Bello
COVID Compliance Officer ..................................... Cameron J Marcotte
Carpenter/Builder .................................................... Tony Davidson

The use of any recording device, either audio or video, and the taking of photographs, either with or without flash, is strictly prohibited during the performance. Please turn off all electronic devices such as cell phones, beepers, and watches. The use of cellphones in the theatre is prohibited by New York City law.
SPECIAL NOTE FROM PLAYWRIGHT

*God’s Way* is very special to me as it pays tribute to my roots as a writer— a teenage girl writing plays by hand in exercise books for her church. I’ve always wanted to tell impactful stories and thanks to Braata Productions, I get to share that dream with you. Thank you so much for being here. Your support in our work means that as Caribbean writers, we get to tell our own stories, stories which demonstrate that beneath it all, we are the same. I hope that as you enjoy the performance you are reminded of the importance of family, friendships, faith and second chances. We all need them.

SPECIAL NOTE FROM DIRECTOR

Faith; complete trust or confidence in someone or something. Faith plays a role in so many aspects of this play. From Braata having faith in me to create such a product, to me having faith in the actors! From the pen of the writer, to the pages of the script, to the eyes of the Director, to the choices of the actors, and then lastly to response from the audience. For most people this might be their first in person theatre experience since our lovely friend COVID-19 came along, and we are more than honored to be, what we hope will be the first of many more to come! I cannot express how proud I am of this show. Lastly, theatre is nothing without you, the audience— thank you for your presence. Thank you for your time. Thank you for your support. Thank you for choosing Theatre.

Yours Truly,
Keenan N. Charles

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WHO’S WHO OF THE CAST

JERRY BENZWICK (Deacon Russell) is a certified drama teacher/actor and graduate of The Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts. Jerry’s known as an actor of stage and screen, MC, Motivational Speaker, Radio Personality, and Casting Director/CEO of Kriswick Talent Scouting and Promotion. He’s a former Drama Therapist who aided in the treatment of mentally ill patients at the University Hospital of the West Indies. Jerry was a co-host on RJR’s Fame 95 fm Full House Fridays, appeared in many stage plays, and received an Actor boy nomination when he played the lead role in the Drama School Production Oroonoko. He has also appeared in several foreign films, local movies, and countless radio and TV Commercials. He is currently Chairman of the Jamaica Rugby Football Union, where under his leadership the sport keeps growing from strength to strength. His hobbies include playing tag rugby, volleyball, spearfishing, windsurfing, swimming, going on expeditions into the bush, and watching movies.

MARSHA-ANN HAY (Valerie White), is a professional Actor, Voice-over Actor in Theater, Television, Film and Radio, a dynamic, multi-faceted artist who is also an extremely gifted powerhouse of production. She brings a mastery of many dialects to the table as an actor, as well as a knack for versatility that has put her at the center of many theatrical productions in a leading role. The Mamalogues, (Klehotas Tshyre’s Cotton Red, Dahlia Harris’ God’s Way, Cindy’s Spirit, Cindy’s Soul, White Blacks, Black Panther Woman, Fanny Berney, The Willings...Ray Cooney’s Run for Your Wife to name a few). Her film and television credits include work with All Fruits Ripe, Ring Games, Royal Palm Estate, The Blackburns Of Royal Palm Estate, in which she was inducted in the Hall of Fame, Betrayal of a Nation... the documentary film (2021 People’s Film Fest in Harlem, Official Indie Night) German Mini Series---Die Affäre Semmelings ... where she played the lead Jamaican role. MARSHA-ANN HAY is a member of Women In Film and Television NY, TRIO Manhattan, The Actors Fund and a volunteer for The Eye Bank for Sight Restoration, NY, LIVEOnNY and New York Cares. She tries to dedicate time as best as she can towards giving back to the causes she is passionate about. Check her out on her website www.marshaannhay.com for more details and updates on her upcoming projects. Also follow her on the various social media platforms @talentedmarshay.

RUSHELL MALCOLM (Georgia White) started her acting career at the age of 7 by entering JCDC Speech competitions where she was awarded Silver and Gold medals for her solo performances. She took a break from acting and trained in dance. She has danced and choreographed for the likes Sean Paul, Sia, and Shenseea. Rushell eventually found her way back to acting after being casted for a short film for the Jamaica Film and Television Association Propella programme. She is now studying Acting in New York.

MITZIE PRATT (Samantha McIntosh) is a Jamaican/American actress who often portrays strong, independent women, and compelling characters on both screen and stage. Her work has earned praise from global audiences and on the film festival circuit. Mitzie can currently be seen in #LoveMyRoomie now streaming on both Amazon Prime and Black Oak TV, she also stars in the short film Maneuver on Vault Access TV, and most recently seen in the
feature film Nanny which had its world premiere at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival. Nanny won the festivals most coveted Grand Jury Prize Award. Some of her memorable New York theater credits include The Nuyorican Poets Cafés award-winning Shango de Ima, Three Sisters, and Smile Orange. In addition, her Jamaican credits include a portrayal as God in Feminine Justice, and the musical productions A Song for You and Man A Yard. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) from The Davis Center for The Performing Arts at The City College of New York, studied at The Actors Studio Drama School, and holds an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in Business Management & Marketing. Follow Mitzie on: instagram.com/realmitziepratt twitter.com/RealMitziePratt facebook.com/RealMitziePratt

EPHPHANY SAMUELS (Georgia White) is an unapologetic Jameroan girl from The Bronx. After many challenges with illnesses, poverty and racism Epiphany dedicated her life and her talents to explore the many facets of humanity because she is an activist for love, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Epiphany an Actress, Director, Writer, and Art Activist. She is Producing Artistic Director and Co-founder of Affirmation Theatre Company. She also holds a BFA in Drama from NYU Tisch. Some of her Off Broadway and Off-Off Broadway acting credits include: “Time Is On My Side” and “Past, Present and Future” produced by Tribeca Performing Arts/WIP and “Empire (TV parody)” and “In Living Color”, produced by “I Act, You Act! Harlem Theater”. Some productions from her own theatre company, Affirmation Theatre Company, that she holds credits to are “The Negro Speaks” by Marcus Dargan and “Graphite”. More recently she set her sights on TV and film. Some of her film credits are “What If?” produced by Fearless Theater Company, “Veronica’s Shadow” and “High School Unseen” that were written and directed by herself. Follow her on Instagram @epiphanyentertainment.

DAHLIA HARRIS (Playwright) is one of the most successful contemporary female playwrights out of Jamaica. In her eleven year career as writer, she has penned over thirteen (13) full length and two (2) short plays with two wins from multiple Actor Boy Award nominations. God’s Way and the sequel God’s Way 2: Carlton’s Redemption are the works for which she copped those two back to back writers awards. She has also written two seasons of the television dramas Ring Games and Thicker than Water. Dahlia’s impressive catalogue includes a range of both comedic and dramatic narratives in diverse genres. She is not only invested in a female lens of world experiences but has a preoccupation with the fallibilities that simply make us human. Dahlia is also copywriter for national behaviour change campaigns, and corporate events and is creator of the web based series ‘Forever I Do’ and ‘Caribbean Diaries’. As CEO of DMH Productions, she is committed to providing employment for creative talent, exploring critical social issues through the Arts and advancing the global presence of Jamaican content. She is the convenor of the Jamaica Women in Theatre Festival.

KEENAN N. CHARLES (Director) is a born and bred New Yorker, and one of the founding members of Black Petal Theatre Group. Keenan has a love for the ‘ why ’ of life– why we laugh, cry, and experience emotion overall. This is what sparked his love for theatre. Keenan is a graduate of the City College of New York’s Theatre department and is navigating through the world as not only a Director but an Actor, Host, And theatre teacher. Some of his recent credits are Be a Man, Signs of Friendship, Barbecue, Circle Mirror Transformation, and Jump!

MOLLIE FRANKEL (Stage Manager) is a multi-faceted theatre artist from New York City.
She is thrilled to be working with Braata Production's for the first time as the stage manager for God's Way. She holds a BA in Theatre from Goucher College and had a passion for theatre since she was a child. Mollie is an advocate for theatre accessibility and diversity and aims to create work that is inclusive for all.

CANDICIE SEGARRA (Assistant Stage Manager) is a NYC based multi-hyphenate creator. Segarra is an Actor, Dancer, Choreographer, Movement Director and Writer. She obtained a dual B.A. in Dance & Theatre from Manhattanville College, with a concentration in Dance Performance & Choreography, focus on Modern dance and a minor in Communications. She has performed live theatre with Off-Off Broadway’s hip-hop vaudeville comedy show: Rebirth of Rabbit’s Foot. She also dances professionally with Cabaret & Burlesque Dance Company, with whom she is currently their Assistant & Rehearsal Director. She enjoys writing and has performed her spoken word poetry and sketch comedy for Rebirth of Rabbit’s Foot shows and other dance performances in NYC. Candice has performed at Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, Jazz at Lincoln Center, The People’s Improv Theater, Disney World, New York City Center, Atlantic Records, Good Morning America, and more. She has also trained and performed in Italy and freelance performs with various entertainment, dance, theatre companies and choreographers. She currently works as a Production Assistant and Covid Compliance Officer for commercials and TV/film.

HARLAN D. PENN (Scenic Design) is a proud graduate of Florida A&M University and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. The South Florida native has designed for off-Broadway, Off Off Broadway, cable television, regional theatre, and educational theatre. In addition, Penn has served as an Art Director and Assistant Art Director for film & television productions for NETLIX, HULU, ABC, NBC, HALLMARK MOVIE CHANNEL, CBS and TURNER BROADCASTING. Mr. Penn has served as assistant scenic designer to Scenic Designer Felix E. Cochren on productions at The McCarter Theatre, Geva Theatre, Syracuse Stage, The Goodman Theatre, Virginia Stage Company, and The Cleveland Playhouse. After a 20 plus career as a set designer, Harlan founded the American-Caribbean Theatre Alliance, Inc. during the summer of 2014. Mr. Penn is also a proud member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and IASTE/United Scenic Artist Local 829 in the scenic design and Scenic Art category. Mr. Penn is currently a professor of Scenic Design at the Howard University Department of Theatre Arts/Chadwick Boseman College of Fine Arts in Washington D.C.

CHRISTOPHER BELLO (Assistant Scenic Design) is an Actor, Director, Stage Manager and Set Designer. Christopher graduated from The City College of New York with a Bachelors of Arts in Theater. He brings a unique perspective as his unfolding story continues to afford him the opportunity to see and experience theater through multiple lenses. An actor who fully commits to bring the story to life, he becomes his character, utilizing practices rich in research and meditation. As a Director, to bring the playwright's vision from paper to the stage, he engages in study of the material that brings understanding and trust. In stage management, he is determined to preserve the director's vision and serves as a mentor to the actors. As a Set Designer, he makes the audience feel as if they are part of every scene by creating work that brings everyone into the world of the play. Having worked on numerous plays and projects, he travels with a wealth of experience which he generously shares with those who care to learn something new. Something “Bello"
JOHNElI DaCOSTA (Costume Designer) is a Menswear Fashion Designer and Graphic Designer. In 2007, he won the logo design competition for the Overseas Examination Commission. In 2012, he completed his BA in Architectural Studies at The University of Technology, Jamaica. After graduation, JohnEli worked as a freelance graphic and events designer, while teaching himself how to sew through books and online tutorials. His eponymous label was conceived on March 17, 2014, with one goal, to change the perception, form and shape of menswear and its idea of masculinity. JohnEli showcased his first collection in Kingston at the 2016 Fashion Block hosted by SAINT International. The collection was well received, hailed as “[showcasing] a higher level of thought and creativity” (Richard Johnson - Daily Observer) and as “expertly tailored ...challenging how we think about men’s wear” (Kara Kia - Susumba).

NICOLA JOHNSON (Prop & Costume Mistress) was born and raised on the beautiful island of Jamaica, where the people are (tallawah) – she was driven to create things with whatever little resources she had. This has melded her into an individual who appreciated the skill of making things by hand. She recalls making fully furnished dollhouses from empty cardboard boxes for her Barbie dolls and would make windows using clear pieces of plastic. As a child, she even built a functional stairway connecting the two story cardboard residence. Nicola took great pride while building these houses – she wanted them to replicate the colossal houses she would see on the hills as a child. As her life transformed, so did her creative skills. Nicola’s parents nurtured her love of art, which allowed her to dabble in just about every area of the discipline. She’s studied photography, studio art, graphic design, event design and planning. With a passion for finding creative solutions, Nicola prides herself on producing quality work with a personal and unique touch to every project.

CAMERON J. MARCOTTE (COVID Compliance Officer) is a certified COVID Compliance Officer and theatre director living in Brooklyn, New York. This summer, he will produce and direct, “Strongbox in the Park,” a short play festival in East Rockaway, New York with Strongbox Theatre. Cameron is thrilled to have been welcomed by the Braata family and happy to assist in creating our safe and healthy environment for artists and audiences alike.

KARL O’BRIAN WILLIAMS (Artistic Director) is a Jamaican-born actor, playwright, producer, and educator. His acting career has taken him from stages in the Caribbean to those in New York, Toronto, and the United Kingdom. His play, ‘The Black That I Am’ has been staged in Glasgow and Galloway for the National Theatre of Scotland, and at the Edinburgh International Fringe Festival. ‘Not About Eve’ had a successful run Off-Off Broadway and at the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. In 2013 the play received 3 AUDELCO nominations for Excellence in Black Theatre including Outstanding Ensemble Cast, Best Dramatic Production, and Best Playwright. ‘The Boys on the Hill’ was a selection in The Culture Project’s 2015 Summer Play Reading series at the Lynn Redgrave Theatre, and for Long Island University’s Kumble Theatre 2016 Pride Month Celebrations. The play is now being developed along with another one act called ‘Gully Queen’ as part of a trilogy on LGBTQ+ lives in Jamaica. Williams’ passion for theatre and education has propelled his work with students of all ages and abilities. He is currently Deputy Chair and Theatre Coordinator in the Speech, Communication and Theatre Arts Department at The Borough of Manhattan Community College (CUNY). For New York University and the Center for
Multipurpose Education & Programs, Williams continues to direct the Martin Luther King Jr. Signature event since 2011, and has produced shows for the Skirball Performing Arts Center, and the Jamaica Performing Arts Center. As Artistic Director for Braata Productions, Karl curates the organization’s bi-annual Caribbean Play Reading Series, creates educational theatre curriculum for after school and senior center programs, and was the brainchild of Braata’s annual events, Bankra Caribbean Folk Festival, and Old Time Grand Market. He has shared the stage with Harry Belafonte, and the late historian and activist Howard Zinn, and pursues artistic projects that interrogate socio-political issues, especially those intersecting with Caribbean culture, queerness, and immigration.

ANDREW CLARKE (Executive Producer) is the Founder and Executive Director of Braata Productions, a nonprofit artistic company that comprises the Braata Folk Singers, Braata Education & Outreach and Braata Theater Workshop. A graduate of The Edna Manley College School of Drama in Kingston, Jamaica and Brooklyn College in New York City, Clarke is an award-winning thespian and vocalist and is a past recipient of the Prime Minister of Jamaica’s Youth Award for Excellence in Arts and Culture. After appearing in several theatrical productions in Jamaica and internationally, he emigrated to New York City in 2009 to further pursue his theatrical and producing ambitions. Since founding Braata Productions, he has produced over two dozen productions including staged readings, fully mounted shows and regional tours of new and established works including The Black That I Am, Hortensia’s Recession, Demerara Gold, Welcome to America: A Caribbean Musical and Single Entry as well as three consecutive seasons of the Braata Folk Singers biennial concert series. Under his guidance as Producer and Artistic Director, the Braata Folk Singers has acquired an impressive resume over the past eleven years that includes performances throughout the New York Tri state area and regionally, from Toronto Canada to Atlanta Georgia. In 2015 he experienced one of his greatest career triumphs to date, when the Off Broadway musical Flambeaux, on which he was a Co-producer, swept the 2015 AUDELCO Awards, winning in six categories including Best Musical of The Year.
FIRE NOTICE: The exit is indicated by the red light and sign nearest to the seat you occupy is the shortest route to the street. In the event of a fire or other emergency please do not run... WALK TO THAT EXIT. Thoughtless persons annoy patrons and endanger the safety of others by lighting matches or smoking in prohibited areas during the performances and intermissions. This violates a city ordinance and it’s punishable by law.
ABOUT BRAATA PRODUCTIONS

Braata Productions Inc. is New York State, 501(c) 3 Professional Performing Arts Company.

Braata is a Jamaican colloquial term meaning ‘more,’ which is what this company aspires to do -- give its supporters and audiences something more at all times. Started by actor/singer Andrew Clarke in May 2009, the goal for Braata has always been to provide entertainment and education to our patrons and give voice to diverse experiences, performers, writers and directors. We aim to authentically represent the culture of the Caribbean islands and to prioritize cultivating and re-telling Caribbean stories and legends for generations to come.

Braata is dedicated to giving Caribbean and Caribbean-American artistes a platform through which to showcase their work and talents. Braata seeks to define its position as one of the leading performing arts organizations in New York City. We maintain strong ties to the community and have a reputation for artistic excellence, educational innovation, and fiscal responsibility.

Allowing immigrants’ voices a chance for creative expression, our principle activities include theatre, music, and folk arts, in addition to education and community outreach. These activities take us on engagements outside of the 5 boroughs of NYC to Connecticut, Rochester, and Boston to name a few. Braata’s goal is to rekindle an appreciation for Caribbean culture & heritage amongst Caribbeans and non-Caribbeans alike by engaging community members in New York and surrounding areas.

BRAATA PRODUCTIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2021 - 2022

BOARD

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CHRISTOPHER LIU - Treasurer  ANDREA ROOKWOOD-BROWN - Secretary

Kia Jones  Winsome Grant  Carolyn Clyne  Andrew Clarke

ADVISORY BOARD

Rose October-Edun  Jeffrey Anderson  Gunter Michael Flanigan  Paula Ohaus
JAMAICAN WORD/PHRASE OF THE DAY

Phrase: **BRUK DI BIAS**
Definition: Break the bias
Sentence: Happy International Women’s day! May we bruk di bias!

Word: **BULLA**
Definition: Baked pastry; generally brown in color and best served with avocado (or as Jamaicans call them pear)
Sentence: I get a nice ginger bulla wid a nice size pear

Word: **COCK-UP**
Definition: Pushed out
Sentence: Ima go cock-up mi bumpa

Word: **COOYAH**
Definition: Look here; Can be used in a sentence or as a sentence (with an exclamation)
Sentence: Cooyah!

Word: **COUTRIMENTS**
Definition: Small things that are not of significance but there are a lot of
Sentence: Watch Keenan and all him coutriments

Word: **DPP**
Definition: Director of public prostitution
Sentence: Mi neva kno heaven hav a DPP

Phrase: **DAWG NYAM YU SUPPA**
Definition: A phrase used if you get in trouble; You do something wrong

Word: **GALANG**
Definition: Go on your own way; Go away

Phrase: **GWAAN YA**
Definition: Go away

Word: **GOODAZ**
Definition: A sexy, hot chick
Sentence: She a goodaz gyal

Word: **HAFFI**
Definition: Have to
Sentence: Mi haffi gwaan to work

Phrase: **HUNGRY BELLY**
Definition: Some who is always hungry or eating
Sentence: Deacon is a hungry belly!

Phrase: **KIBBA YU MOUT**
Definition: Shut your mouth
Sentence: Keenan, Kibba yu mout

Word: **MAKKA**
Definition: Prickly plant; A very pretty plant prominent in dry areas
Sentence: I love yu suh much, I woulda run tru makka naked

Phrase: **MIX-UP AND BLEnda**
Definition: Gossip- As in, ‘let me tell this and get you involved’
Sentence: Mi nhuwaah involve inna no mix-up and blenda

Word: **NECKBACK**
Definition: The back of your neck; Can be used as an exclamation, description or curse
Sentence: Kiss mi neckback!

Word: **PICKNEY**
Definition: Child; Little one; Kid
Sentence: I haffi get mi pickney dress before mi take har to school

Word: **QUASHIE**
Definition: Jamaican escaped slave
Sentence: If yu cyan ketch quashie yu cyan ketch him shut

Word: **RASS**
Definition: Equivalent to F**K
Sentence: A wah di rass wrong wid yu?

Word: **STANDPIPE**
Definition: (1) A community in Kingston, Jamaica called Standpipe; Serves the community water to undeveloped areas. (2) Gather water to take back home, social gathering, bathe etc.
Sentence: The best dance dem keep a Standpipe

Word: **STUSH**
Definition: Bougie; Snobby
Sentence: Samantha too Stush

Phrase: **TAN DEH DEH**
Definition: Stay there
Sentence: Yu can tan deh deh mi nhu want nutten fram yu

Phrase: **TEK WEH YUH SELF**
Definition: Move away, go away; Separate
Sentence: Mi no tell you se fi tek weh yuh self

Phrase: **YUH LUCKY**
Definition: Good for you
Sentence: Yuh lucky mi never lik ya dung
ANNUAL
5k RUN WALK
MAY 14 2022

Registration: **9 am**
Start: **10 am**
Entry Fee: **$35**
Place: **Brookville Park**
Brookville Blvd, Rosedale, NY 11422
(Entrance between Weller Ave & Caney Rd.)

Come join us on a fun socially distant walk/run.
$35 includes event t-shirt and water.

Register at:
[braataproductions.org/5K](http://braataproductions.org/5K)

All proceeds benefit Braata’s Arts & Education Programs
THE
Braata Folk Singers
IN CONCERT

JUNE 4 & 5, 2022
Jamaica Performing Arts Center
153-10 Jamaica Ave, Jamaica, NY 11432
Tickets and information at
WWW.BRAATAPRODUCTIONS.ORG
ABOUT THE SHOW -
God’s Way is an absorbing drama that examines everything from faith, fractured friendships and mother-daughter relationships to trust, resentment and crime and punishment. It is an exploration of human behaviour, class and the price of dignity – and how we rise to face thunderstorms, which will ultimately determine if we perish or prevail. In a spiritual battle victory isn’t always in sight… the only way to overcome is to trust God’s plan. Through it all… will Valerie try to make it on her own or will she make it out by trusting God.

For general information: www.braataproductions.org or call 917-668-2209

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Join us at our upcoming events

braataproductions.org
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