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 BY PHILIP BRANDES
 

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## 'Paradise' at the Odyssey

**The essentials:** Reduced to teaching high school in an impoverished South Bronx district, a disgraced scientist (stage veteran Jeff Marlow) finds an unexpected opportunity for personal and career redemption in mentoring a brilliant Yemeni American student (Medalion Rahimi, from ABC's "Still Star-Crossed"). When opposition from the girl's tradition-minded immigrant family threatens their potentially groundbreaking research project, the resulting clash of science, religion and culture proves a test of character for both.

**Why this?** Funny and moving by turns, Laura Maria Censabella's script steers clear of familiar clichés (there's no tawdry student-teacher romance, for example) and charts an unexpected but convincing resolution for its vividly drawn protagonists. Viola Davis and husband Julius Tennon developed the play through their JuVee Productions, which fosters independent, socially relevant new works in theater, film, television and other media.

**Details:** A JuVee Productions and American Oasis co-production at Odyssey Theatre, 2055 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles. 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays, ends Feb. 17. \$35. (323) 960-7724, [plays411.com](http://plays411.com)



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**JEFF MARLOW'S** teacher mentors Medalion Rahimi's student in "Paradise."