

# The Tale Of Pythagoras

By Nathan Alterman

Play no. 211

Opening show: 02/10/1965

Directed by : Shraga Friedman

Setting by: Arie Navon

Lighting by: Michael Liberman

The Cast

**Pythagoras:** Amnon Meskin

**The Director:** Aharon Meskin

**The ill Brother of the Director:** Raphael Klatzkin

**Issachar:** Abraham Ronai

**Zelzach:** Slomo Bar-Shavit / Leo Filer

**Rosa:** Elisheva Michaeli

**Dina:** Shulamit Yaron

**Marco:** Leon Yung

**Bartender:** Shmuel Rudenski

**The Play**

**Act 1**

**Scene 1**

The curtain opens on the office of a Computer Institute which serves clients. The director feels that lately something has been upsetting the computer, Pythagoras and he asks his staff to watch it carefully.

**Scene 2**

The director's brother, who sustained a head-injury some time earlier, and has not recovered, is living in the director's quarters at the Institute. His presence arouses in the computer memories of words and concepts which cannot be programmed into numbers. When the director reminds Pythagoras that he keep within the bounds of numbers, the computer asks what force brought it unto the world, put it to works, and is keeping its nose to the grindstone.

**Scene 3**

Marco suddenly appears in the little café near the Institute. He is a wanderer who has just returned from his travels and become a boot-black. The conversation revolves around the director's brother, and the fact that his assailant is still unknown.

**Scene 4**

The director brings a waitress named Dina to the Institute in order to find out how Pythagoras reacts to new and strange people.

**Scene 5**

The director brings a waitress named Dina to the Institute in order to find out how first came to work at the institute. He recalls the times be used to spend with his brother until he was hurt and lost his memory. He considers his life d

## **Act 2**

### **Scene 1**

The Institute staff are checking the computer's reasoning powers. Suddenly Pythagoras announces the identification of fingerprints that reveal who attacked the director's brother.

### **Scene 2**

After this revelation, Rosa's purpose in life is eliminated, as she has spent years undermining the director's confidence and fostering his gnawing doubts.

### **Scene 3**

The director is extremely grateful to Pythagoras for rescuing him from the depression he had been sunk in for so long. Marco stops by, and in the ensuing conversation the director learns he orders Pythagoras to inform the detectives that the attempt at identification failed, but Pythagoras cannot obey such instructions. In order to cancel the computer's findings, the director decides to destroy Pythagoras, thus removing the solace he had gained after so many years.

### **Scene 4**

The café-owner and Marco discuss Pythagoras, whose destruction has already begun.

### **Scene 5**

Dina enters the computer room, incensed at Pythagoras of the apparently false identification to which she had been a party and innocent contributor. However, the ruins and utter confusion reigning during the process of destroying the computer dissolve her anger, and the loneliness and sadness of Pythagoras tear at her heart-strings.

### **Scene 6**

The clerk is gleeful at Pythagoras' downfall, and looks forward to the day when thought and logic will disappear from the earth.

### **Scene 7**

The director remains alone with old Rosa, that the computer's identification was correct, but that he suppressed it voluntarily, a course which gave him a satisfying feeling that his life was based on free will and considered decisions. Rosa tells him that she knew all along who attacked his brother, but said nothing, although a

single word from her would have changed his entire life. At this point the director realizes that it was not thought or wisdom that rules his world, but the mad jealousy of an old secretary.

Everything becomes an obscure pointless joke. At the last moment, the disintegrating computer still manages to utter a fragmentary phrase.

A spark of redeeming logic still remains, leaving the door open to faith and the future.