

# JUGGLING LOVE, TRADITION

Actress' struggle to marry woman she loves becomes comedy in 'June Bride'

BY CHRISTINA LEE  
[SUN REPORTER]

SINCE THE TIMES OF ROMAN MYTHOLOGY, June has been known as the luckiest time to have a wedding. Consider the month's namesake, Juno, who was not only a warrior at heart, but a goddess of marriage.

To prepare for the big day, though, most brides-to-be need more than just luck. Nearly 15 years ago, Sara Felder wanted a traditional Jewish wedding. But without the approval of the religious community — and her parents — she stood no chance of achieving this goal.

Fortunately, Felder did marry and tells the tale in *June Bride*, a one-woman comedic performance based on the obstacles she fought to marry her true love — a woman.

"It is about how they feel about tradition, and how tradition feels about them," she said.

A renowned juggler, Felder tosses up cigar boxes, balls, scarves and more to illustrate the balance the couple had to strike between the Jewish tradition and their seemingly unconventional love. The juggling acts are paired with comedic monologues to weave a story she first told audiences more than 10 years ago.

A recitation of a poem about circumcision — while juggling knives — is just one act to expect. Felder's personal favorite, though, is her contact juggling act, when she maneuvers a glass ball along the contours of her body as she recites a prayer.

"I love the rhythm, I love the patterns, and I love how people can see different things," she said. "With the text and the music, the juggling is placed in a specific context, but it is open to different interpretations. People can make what they want of it."

While juggling grabs the attention of audiences, Felder has found that laughter makes them more receptive to her thoughts.

"Laughter makes them more open. A lecture can't do that," she said. "Laughter makes them more open to complexity, to poignancy."

Felder learned how to juggle in a University of California, Los Angeles college course. Its instructor emphasized that dropping the objects was necessary to learn. Now, she understands this too.

"If I dropped knives while I was juggling, would it cut off my hand? No," Felder said. "I may shed some blood, but is it really dangerous? It becomes this psychic battle, the juggler versus gravity. That's what life is, too."

Felder's first performances were at political benefits, for California's anti-nuclear



Sara Felder exploits the obvious metaphor of life and juggling.

[COURTESY SARA FELDER]

movement and Central American solidarity movements. There, Felder found her voice.

"I found that when I was juggling, people listened to what I had to say," she said.

*June Bride* is just one of Felder's four productions, her latest being *Out of Sight*. Beneath all of the questions dealing with the au courant topics of religion and same-sex marriage, *June Bride* is a story that everyone has heard.

"It is a classic love story," she said. "It's about two people who want to get married, but they can't."

*June Bride* runs today through March 18 at Theatre Project, 45 W. Preston St. Showtimes are 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays and 3 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$11-\$16. Call 410-752-8558 or go to [missiontix.com](http://missiontix.com).

[christina.lee@baltsun.com](mailto:christina.lee@baltsun.com)