

Dale's show *50! Evolution of a Butch Lesbian* deals with issues like aging, abortion, drugs, George Bush, and our health system. Another piece "was about my father's death while in hospice care. I'm really proud of this piece. I combine text with mimetic movement and dialogue with my dad. It was a beautiful moment of mime. . . . There's really something special about being with someone while they're dying. I had reconciled with my father after not having spoken to him for many years."

Paul Whetstone wrote all of the music to go with Dale Wolf's lyrics for *In the OUTfield* and for *50! Evolution of a Butch Lesbian*. This is from *In the OUTfield*.

Crush Song

I had a crush on the girl next door.
She never noticed.
We were friends, nothing more.

I had a crush on the girl next door.
I'd see her in the halls at school.
My heart would just soar.
I'd gaze at her at lunch time
Then I'd look through the floor
Cause I had a crush on the girl next door.

We'd sit up real late at night
Talk til around four.
I gave her a flower once.
She asked, "What's it for?"

I had a crush on the girl next door.
She never noticed.
We were friends, nothing more.

JACQUI SINGLETON: SINGER, SONGWRITER, PLAYWRIGHT

Merril Mushroom

Jacqui Singleton was a Virginia singer, songwriter, playwright, director, and lesbian activist. She wrote her first play when she was a senior in high school in Norfolk (although she said in a YouTube interview that she used to write dirty stories when she was in grade school). She said, "My creative writing teacher had me write a scene, and it turned into a play which she got produced on public TV in Norfolk.

By the time she graduated in 1977 from Longwood College as a theatre major, she had written thirteen more one-act plays. In 1979, she performed at the first Pride event in Richmond. She played the guitar and sang with The Richmond Jazz Ladies but also performed by herself and put together bands that played at festivals. In 1984 she founded Artists Alliance, a theatre group under the wing of the Richmond Department of Recreation & Parks. Her play *Crazy Man* was produced by Off-Off Broadway in New York in 1982, but it didn't come to Richmond until 1994. Jacqui thought it would be unsuitable for Richmond because it had a lesbian relationship in it.

During that time, women were not represented very well in theatre, and Jacqui was instrumental in bringing women's stories to the forefront. Mary Isemann, who met her in the Longwood theatre department, said of her, "She had a tendency to cast shows with her heart. She had a vision for her shows and might cast somebody that nobody else agreed with. She was an original. She knew what she wanted, and it always worked."¹

In 1992, she helped start Richmond Triangle Players. She was on their board and directed her own play *Manny & Jake* as their first

¹ Jacqui Singleton's obituary in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 4, 2014, www.richmond.com.

full-length production. She produced and directed plays written by herself, Carolyn Gage, and others through her production company JERA Entertainment, Inc. She staged a play she wrote, *Journey Home*, which told the story of her discovery of the white owners of her mother's family in the antebellum South. She also headed Singleton Entertainment LLC, an artist development and music event business.

Jacqui wrote several published novels (including two adult fantasies featuring a lesbian heroine) and a children's story. She died in 2013 at the age of fifty-eight from complications of several physical illnesses.



Photo by Bobbi Weinstock

Jacqui Singleton (with guitar at right) and her band performing for Richmond Lesbian Feminists New Year's Eve party on the eve of 2000. [Originally published in *Lesbian and Gay Richmond*, by Beth Marschak and Alex Lorch (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), p. 113.]

VIRGINIA ARTIST PATRICIA R. CORBETT

Merril Mushroom

Patricia Corbett is an award-winning playwright, advocate, artist, educator, published author, and feminist entrepreneur whose passions are community service, social justice, and education. She just completed an MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts from Goddard College, Plainfield, VT. Patricia encourages marginalized populations to seek their truth, claim their power, and tell their stories. Her father, Linwood Corbett, Sr., was a community organizer, civil rights activist, and minister who greatly influenced her life and her work. He sent his entire family to college working as a baggage foreman for Greyhound bus line and custodian at Virginia Union University where she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in English. At some point in his early life, her father shared with her that he had wanted to be an actor. Patricia's mother, Mary V. Corbett, is a poet and artist as well as a retired educational professional and the first Black professional clown in the state of Virginia. The combination of these two extraordinary parents supported Patricia's passion for community service, social justice, radical disorientation, writing, and humor.

Patricia always considered herself a writer of poetry and short fiction until, on a whim, she turned one of her short stories, "Fall of the House of Snow," into a play. As a result, she received a Maryland State Arts Council Individual Artist Award for Playwriting. The play tells the story of how a group of men and a devoted woman become family as a result of their rejection from their families, communities, and churches. Set in the late 1980s against the backdrop of the rapid rise of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, "it was a story that had to be told,"¹ Corbett goes on: "Nothing had been written about the psychological and emotional impact this had on families

¹ All quotations are from Rose Norman's phone interview with Patricia Corbett, December 2, 2015.