



Fernando "Dito" van Reigersberg

June 1, 2026

Fernando S. van Reigersberg ("Dito") passed away on June 1, 2026, of complications from leukemia, at age 53. He was surrounded by his family and a host of loving friends from the many facets of a life well lived. There were songs and tears and abundant expressions of love offered to him and to his family.

Dito was born on November 11, 1972 in Washington DC. He graduated from Langley High School in 1990 in McLean, Virginia and from Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania in 1994. He then completed an acting degree at The Neighborhood Playhouse in New York City, and returned to his beloved Philadelphia in 1997. He was a co-founder of the renowned Pig Iron Theatre Company together with Dan Rothenberg and Quinn Bauriedel and co-created and acted in many of its productions. He was named a Pew Fellow and a USA Knight Fellow, along with numerous Barrymore Awards and an OBIE Award for Hell Meets Henry Halfway, which he co-created and played the role of Henry. Most recently he conceived and co-produced a show based on the songs of Aimee Mann, Poor Judge, which last ran at the Wilma Theatre in January of this year. It was awarded the Barrymore Award for Outstanding Production of a Musical in 2025. He also taught at the Pig Iron School and was a beloved mentor to its students.

He created the character of Martha Graham Cracker, the tallest hairiest drag queen in the world, and entertained legions of admirers at many venues all over Philadelphia, in New York, and throughout the world. His voice was a

precious gift which he shared with the world (many examples are available on YouTube). Dito and Martha Graham Cracker Cabaret recently celebrated their 20th Anniversary Extravaganza. He co-wrote and conceived an original musical starring Martha Graham Cracker, Lashed But Not Leashed which is available on Spotify and other music platforms.

He is survived by his husband, choreographer Matthew Neenan, his mother Stephanie van Reigersberg, his sister Alexia Bastiaansen, her husband Steven, and two nephews, Luke and Eli. He is also survived by his beloved Gerritt Street family and a host of friends and colleagues in his many worlds and who share the grief of his immediate family. We are comforted by the outpouring of eloquent words we have seen, written and online, and confident that the world he has left is a better place because of his presence in it.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to Blood Cancer United, Pig Iron Theatre Company and/or BalletX.

A memorial will be announced at a later date.