

Press Release

BERLIN, August 2026



**ENGLISH
THEATRE
BERLIN**

International Performing Arts Center



The West Aint What It Used to Be

Theater | World Premiere: October 8, 2026 | 8pm

Additional Performances: Oct 9 / 10 / 13 / 14 / 15 / 16 / 17 | 8pm

An evening of conversation, country & western music an Jell-O salad

A lot of folks are worried about the state of democracy in the United States. Is it teetering on the brink? Is a civil war looming? Are the tech billionaires supporting its downfall?

Thanksgiving in Berlin. Fred and his US-American wife Rhonda have invited guests from her motherland over for a turkey dinner. Inevitably, the conversation drifts from the American Dream, via Karl May and Western movies, to the topic of all topics: What is going on in the US? Strangely enough, Dolly Parton seems to be in the room, too. And a country & western band magically appears. The evening escalates...

In “The West Ain’t What It Used To Be”, *The Waltraud Experience* tackles one of the most pressing issues of our time: The right and the left stand in completely irreconcilable opposition; a stalemate has been reached – Where are the United States headed?

Country music icon **Dolly Parton** – who sadly passed away on August 25th – was often looked to as a unifying figure*; someone both the right and the left can agree on. Yet, a closer look reveals that Dolly preferred to stay out of it ... she sang, she cracked jokes, and she championed “positive thinking”... but politics? No thanks.

The Waltraud Experience performs cultural history – first in a series of six productions dealing with science issues ([the Science&Theatre series](#)) followed by four “Conversations with Cultural Icons” – [Jaws/Der weiße Hai](#) – [Bowie in Berlin](#) – [Pop! Andy Warhol&The Velvet Underground](#) – *The West Ain’t What It Used To Be.* – shows about the question how Pop became Culture. They have been coproducing with ETB/IPAC since 2010.

* [Is There Anything We Can All Agree On? Yes: Dolly Parton](#) (The New York Times, Nov. 21, 2019)

with Robin Gooch, Bailey Hubbs, Felix Theissen, Carina Zox
Music played live by Kellie O’Neill, Ioni Music, Ben Osborn
Concept and Direction: Günther Grosser and Priscilla Bergey
Music by various artists, arranged by Ben Osborn | Video: Holly Barnard | Costumes: Angharad Matthews | Lighting: Katri Kuusimäki | Sound: Klaus Altenmüller | Stage Management and Directing Assistance: Izzy Rousmaniere | Photography: Stefania Migliorati

A coproduction of English Theatre Berlin | International Performing Arts Center production and *The Waltraud Experience*

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