

Bruce Springsteen, Philip Glass, Renée Fleming, Lucinda Williams, Edward Norton, Giancarlo Esposito ...

Artists voice growing opposition to Trump, call for “general strike” and “revolution”

David Walsh
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There is growing and widespread popular opposition to the Trump administration and the entire political establishment, including the Democratic Party, and to the violent attacks on immigrants and protesters, as well as the fascist policies of war and endless aggression. A deep-going radicalization is under way.

The upsurge of resistance, unlike anything that has been seen in decades, is beginning to find many important expressions, including among classical and popular musicians, actors, writers and even professional athletes.

In recent days, to cite a few examples, Bruce Springsteen released “Streets of Minneapolis,” decrying “King Trump’s private army from the DHS” and “Miller and Noem’s dirty lies,” composer Philip Glass and soprano Renée Fleming withdrew from the “Trump-Kennedy Center” in Washington in protest and actor Edward Norton appealed for a nationwide general strike.

It is impossible to register all the signs of outrage and disgust, that would require a daily, almost hourly updating, but these are some of the significant developments along these lines.

? *Newsweek* magazine on January 26 carried the unusual headline, “Hollywood Demands ‘National Strike’ After Alex Pretti Killing.”

The article cited the comments of award-winning actor Norton:

We have extrajudicial assaults on Americans and humans going on a daily basis now and it’s not okay. We cannot act like this is not happening. What they’re doing in Minnesota with the strike needs to expand. I think we should be talking about a national general economic strike until this is over.

Newsweek also quoted actress Olivia Wilde, who told an interviewer, “If we can do anything to support the movement to cast ICE out and delegitimize this criminal organization, then that’s what we should be doing.” Veteran performer Glenn Close observed that she was “outraged and sickened by what is happening under the Trump regime. The cruelty, inhumanity, and arrogance...and now, the cold-blooded murder of American citizens.”

? Popular television performer Pedro Pascal (*The Last of Us*), with some 12 million followers, reposted what has become a popular image, drawings of Pretti and Renée Nicole Good and the words, “Pretti Good reason for a national strike.” Popular actress-singer Ariana Grande (*Wicked*), with tens of millions of followers, reposted information about a proposed general strike January 30 in her social media accounts, as did

Emmy-award-winning Hannah Einbinder of *Hacks*, singer Billie Eilish and actress-comedian Patti Harrison.

The latter added her own comment and personal video in regard to a proposed general strike:

GENERAL STRIKE THIS FRIDAY JAN. 30TH in solidarity w Minneapolis & everyone else being terrorized right now.

? Actress Eva Longoria (*Desperate Housewives*) on Tik Tok:

They’re blatantly murdering US citizens, detaining 5-year-olds, patrolling schools and churches. Imagine what they’re doing behind closed doors at detention centers with no cameras around.

? Veteran actor Giancarlo Esposito (*Breaking Bad*, *Megalopolis*), in a generally well-meaning if confused statement, told *Variety* at the Sundance Film Festival that it was “time for a revolution.” Referring to the powers that be, Esposito commented that “they don’t even know that’s what they’re starting.” They might kill many people, “but the rest of us would survive with a new [world].”

Esposito went on, reports *Variety*:

Some very rich old white men are exerting their power to suppress our own people, thus creating a feeling of civil war in the streets, preparing the haters to hate, teaching them how to shoot,” Esposito said. “This is all a preparation for a very insidious problem that’s happening in our world. And for me, I have to speak out. We will not be ICE’d out. This is not going to happen.

? Actress Molly Ringwald (*The Breakfast Club*), in a four-minute video, warned viewers that there was “something horrible, horrible going on in our country right now. And we have one of the greatest countries—had one of the greatest countries in the world. And I’ve also been so proud to be an American but right now this is a fascist government.” She continued, “It’s not becoming a fascist government. It is a fascist government. And ICE is brutalizing people.”

Ringwald pointed to the example of wartime France and those who

collaborated with the Nazis. She warned that this stigma, of being a “collaborationist,” would attach itself to those who remained “complacent” under present conditions.

? On January 28, veteran singer-songwriter Bruce Springsteen released a new song, *Streets of Minneapolis*. He commented on social media:

I wrote this song on Saturday, recorded it yesterday and released it to you today in response to the state terror being visited on the city of Minneapolis. It's dedicated to the people of Minneapolis, our innocent immigrant neighbors and in memory of Alex Pretti and Renee Good.

The third verse goes:

Trump's federal thugs beat up on
His face and his chest
Then we heard the gunshots
And Alex Pretti lay in the snow dead
Their claim was self-defense, sir
Just don't believe your eyes
It's our blood and bones
And these whistles and phones
Against Miller and Noem's dirty lies

? Singer Lady Gaga interrupted a concert in Tokyo this week to tell her audience:

My heart is aching thinking about the people, the children, the families, all over America who are being mercilessly targeted by ICE. I'm thinking about all of their pain and how their lives are being destroyed right in front of us. I'm also thinking about Minnesota and everyone back at home who is living in so much fear and searching for answers on what we all should do. When entire communities lose their sense of safety and belonging, it breaks something in all of us.

? Bright Eyes' frontman Conor Oberst wrote on Instagram,

There is no more time for capitulation or subjugation. ICE must get the f--- out of Minneapolis and all U.S. cities. The officers involved in the last two killings of innocent protesters must immediately be arrested and prosecuted. Anyone that works for or supports this criminal administration and their myriad illegal and unamerican activities should feel nothing but shame.

? Rosanne Cash, daughter of Johnny Cash, and a remarkable singer and songwriter in her own right, on X:

DHS is ... too busy shooting private citizens and deporting 5-year-olds. It's unspeakable. It's a sign of a country that is falling apart ... This isn't the country I was born in or that my ancestors have been here for since the 17th Century. Never thought I'd see this. Defund ICE. Not only defund them, prosecute them.

? Music legend Lucinda Williams released what *Rolling Stone* referred to as a “Trump-bashing album” (*World's Gone Wrong*) on January 23. She asked *Rolling Stone*, “Should I be afraid? ... People think the FBI [will] drag me off the stage or something.”

? As noted above, composer Philip Glass has canceled a world premiere at the erstwhile Kennedy Center, now illegally named “Trump-Kennedy Center,” of a symphony about Abraham Lincoln. His Symphony No. 15, “Lincoln,” was to have been conducted by Grammy winner Karen Kamensek on June 12 and 13.

In a statement, Glass explained:

After thoughtful consideration, I have decided to withdraw my Symphony No. 15 “Lincoln” from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Symphony No. 15 is a portrait of Abraham Lincoln, and the values of the Kennedy Center today are in direct conflict with the message of the Symphony. Therefore, I feel an obligation to withdraw this Symphony premiere from the Kennedy Center under its current leadership.

? Famed soprano Renée Fleming withdrew last week from two scheduled May appearances at the Kennedy Center, now under Trump's dirty thumb. A year ago, NBC reports, “she resigned as [the Center's] ‘Artistic Advisor at Large,’ citing the forced departures of Kennedy Center Chair David Rubenstein and its president, Deborah Rutter.”

? Popular novelist Stephen King, with 7 million followers, commented bluntly on X January 23, “ICE is the American Gestapo.”

? In a typically eccentric, colorful move, veteran musician Neil Young announced January 27 he was giving free access to his entire music catalog to residents of Greenland, in hope that the music “will ease some of the unwarranted stress and threats you are experiencing from our unpopular and hopefully temporary government. It is my sincere wish for you to be able to enjoy all of my music in your beautiful Greenland home, in its highest quality.” The offer is for a year, but Young indicated it might be renewable.

? Professional basketball players have chimed in, denouncing ICE and the Trump administration. Those include the Indiana Pacers' Tyrese Haliburton (“Alex Pretti was murdered”); San Antonio Spurs' Victor Wembanyama (“horrified” by events); DiJonai Carrington, of the WNBA's Minnesota Lynx (referred to ICE agents as “criminals” who murder people and urged her followers on Instagram to “never normalize evil”); and Breanna Stewart, WNBA/Unrivaled star (held an “Abolish ICE” sign during player introductions January 25).

Coaches Steve Kerr (Golden State Warriors) and Chris Finch (Minnesota Timberwolves) have also spoken out against ICE violence. Olympic skier Gus Kenworthy meanwhile, according to media accounts, used “explicit language” to denounce ICE.

Following reports that an ICE unit would provide security at the 2026 Winter Olympics, Milan's Mayor Giuseppe Sala called the agency a “militia that kills” and declared its agents were “not welcome” in the northern Italian city.



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