# Pop Star Dua Lipa's Hit "Swan Song" References AIDS Activists [VIDEO]

Part of the soundtrack to "Alita: Battle Angel," the empowering single is one of the most played new songs on Spotify.

February 1, 2019 By Trent Straube

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More than two decades after they first stormed streets and changed history, the AIDS activists of ACT UP continue to inspire people to fight injustice. Global pop star Dua Lipa gives a nod to the "Silence = Death" activists in her newest hit, "Swan Song."

> Read a lil bit about the backstory to our song "SWAN SONG" ????⚔ @AlitaMovie #DuAlita // listen and watch the video https://t.co/RZSbX79T4J pic.twitter.com/vCIB5reScW
>
> — DUA LIPA (@DUALIPA) January 26, 2019

Rousing lyrics include "I won't stay quiet, I won't stay quiet / 'Cause staying silent's the same as dying / I won't stay quiet, the flicker's burning low." The defiant chorus promises: "This is not a, this is not a swan song, swan song." (You can watch the video at the top of this article.)

The single was released in January as part of the soundtrack to Alita: Battle Angel, which opens in theaters February 14. The movie tells the futuristic story of a young cyborg girl who becomes an empowered warrior. It's no surprise that Lipa would find inspiration in real-life activists, and it's impressive that she shares that knowledge through her social media.

> .@DUALIPA has the Midas Touch! "Swan Song" is the

most-played new song of the week on Spotify: https://t.co/47SlZXeLJq pic.twitter.com/TwNXpNFyzD — idolator (@idolator) January 27, 2019

In talking about the genesis of “Swan Song,” Lipa tweeted this message:

> To give you a little more backstory to our song for the Alita Battle Angel motion picture. A Swan Song is by definition a persons final public performance or professional activity before retirement. So the idea behind it is that “This is NOT a swan song” this is only the beginning of our fight for justice. Alita fights for the lives of marginalised people. Hopefully we all find a part of ourselves in Alita’s character and see that we mustn’t ever quit our battle against the injustices of the world. Even in the hardest moments we must speak up. Lyrically, the song references the brilliant minds at Act Up, a HIV and AIDS activist group from the 80s who’s motto was “Silence equals death” with the hopes that in our everyday life we put into action this deeper meaning so that silence never become us.

Directed by Robert Rodriguez, Alita stars Rosa Salazar, Christoph Waltz, Jennifer Connelly, Mahershala Ali, Ed Skrein, Jackie Earle Haley and Keean Johnson. It’s based on the manga (graphic novel) series Gunnm by Yukito Kishiro. Here’s the trailer:

Lipa, 23, was born in England to Albanian parents from Kosovo. If you’re not familiar with the name Dua Lipa, you’ve probably heard her pop hits. She’s one of the most streamed artists on Spotify, and the video for her song “New Rules” (see below) broke a YouTube record this time last year when it got 1 billion views, making her the youngest female artist to reach that milestone.

Lipa’s other hits include “One Kiss” with Calvin Harris, “IDGAF” (as in, “I don’t give a f--k”) and “Blow Your Mind (Mwah).”

ACT UP, which stands for AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, launched in 1987. The activists of the group became famous for their traffic-stopping, headline-making political actions as well as their graphics and chants. Their tactics were effective and helped change the way doctors treat patients and how drugs are tested and approved. The group was the subject of the documentary How to Survive a Plague and inspired the movie BPM. Today, many ACT UP chapters remain active in cities across the globe.

For related news, see the POZ interview with ACT UP member and photographer Bill Bytsura “Stories Behind the Portraits in ‘the AIDS activist project.’” And don’t miss “How Are Early Members of ACT UP Adjusting Today?” and “Thirty Years Later, AIDS Activists Who ‘Seized Control’

Discuss Their Legacy [VIDEO].” For much more, click on the hashtags below.

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