

World-renowned cellist Julian Lloyd Webber pledges support for Action Duchenne, the Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Charity

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Press Release

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Famous musician becomes latest patron for Action Duchenne, the Charity that supports sufferers and families of Muscular Dystrophy

Julian Lloyd Webber, the experienced musical authority and world-renowned cellist has become a patron of Action Duchenne, the Muscular Dystrophy Charity. The chair of the British Government's In Harmony programme, Julian Lloyd Webber has announced his support of the charity, set up in 2001 to fund research and support sufferers and their families of the disease. Lloyd Webber joins an impressive list of patrons - actors and famous professionals - including Helen Bonham Carter, Tim Henman, Maureen Lipmann, Lloyd Honeyghan, Lord David Puttnam and Bryan Robson, OBE.

Duchenne affects 3,500 people in the UK and about 40,000 people worldwide. It has no cure and is caused by mutations in the dystrophin gene that prevent correct reading of the genetic code, the result of which is that the essential muscle protein dystrophin is not produced. This results in progressive muscle wasting, severely limiting mobility in teenage patients (boys and men) and leading to premature death in their twenties from respiratory or cardiac problems (the heart muscle is directly affected by the genetic defect).

Julian Lloyd Webber said; "I became aware of the wonderful work being done by Action Duchenne during my recent performances with the Edinburgh Youth Orchestra. I am so impressed by what they are achieving that I immediately offered to become a patron of the charity.

"Even though there are so many 'good causes' vying for contributions I honestly believe that Action Duchenne deserves the greatest possible support."

Julian Lloyd Webber won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music at the age of sixteen, and went on to study in Geneva with the acclaimed French cellist, Pierre Fournier. Since then, he has collaborated with an array of musicians, from Yehudi Menuhin to Elton John, and has worked to encourage and support music education and excellence in the UK. In 1994, he was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Music.

Nick Catlin, CEO of Action Duchenne said; "It is fantastic to have support in our cause to fund research and develop treatments for this devastating disease. Everyone involved in the Charity works hard to raise funds and support families through difficult times and it is with heartfelt thanks that we welcome a new patron who will help us to raise the profile and help us in our efforts. Julian Lloyd Webber's patronage and comments also underline the recognition that our volunteers and supporters deserve for their hard work to date in promoting the Charity's work to fund important research."

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Notes to Editors:

About Action Duchenne

Action Duchenne (formally Parent Project UK) was set up by Duchenne families in 2001 to promote new research for a cure for Duchenne. The charity has a strong record in funding research and has to date funded 8 major projects costing £800,000 and has lead the £1.6m DoH funding of the MDEX project. These projects have enabled much needed early work to be completed on exon skipping and other therapeutic approaches.

Action Duchenne holds an international conference every year to bring together researchers and families to exchange new research developments and provide a vital meeting venue for scientists.

In 2005 Action Duchenne launched the Duchenne Registry, the first National Duchenne database that holds gene information of people living with Duchenne and can be used to speed up the recruitment of patients for clinical trials.

In 2006 Action Duchenne launched a comprehensive learning and behaviour toolkit for use by parents and education professionals.

For more information please visit: www.actionduchenne.org

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