

Comics told Perrier's no laughing matter

Link with Nestle provokes comedian to call for boycott over baby milk

By Gina Davidson
and Louise Rimmer

COMEDIANS performing at this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe are being urged to boycott the prestigious Perrier Awards because of the company's links with multi-national food firm Nestle.

The Swiss business, which owns the bottled water firm, has been criticised for giving free powdered baby milk to mothers in developing countries in violation of World Health Organisation (WHO) regulations.

It has been accused of encouraging mothers to give up breast feeding in favour of nutritionally inferior powdered milk. Poor sanitation means that the water used to dilute the milk powders is often impure, giving babies diarrhoea - and

sometimes leading to their death. Comic Rob Newman, the former comedy partner of David Baddiel, is now leading calls for a boycott of the Perrier Awards.

Baby Milk Action, the UK arm of the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), has asked comedians at the Fringe not to enter the Perrier-sponsored competition in protest.

The British organisation, which campaigns for a boycott of Nestle goods, is backed by stars Emma Thompson, Julie Walters and Richard E Grant.

It believes that by refusing to compete in the awards - which can launch a struggling comic to television stardom - entertainers will send a strong message to Nestle.

Newman, who made his comeback at the Fringe three years ago after quitting comedy



in 1993, said: "I would certainly urge comedians at the Fringe to boycott the awards this year because of the involvement of Nestle."

Newman admitted that until recently he had been unaware of the connection between Perrier and Nestle, but that a boycott would be a way of making the point to the companies.

The IBFAN Network claims that Nestle is the worst violator of the WHO code, which states that companies producing formula milk for babies should not directly promote or sell their products to new mothers, provide free samples to them or to healthcare workers, or use improper labelling or pictures that idealise the product.

Just two months ago, the WHO recommended that new mothers should feed their babies exclusively with breast milk for the first six months to help build up immunity.

They also warned that improper use of formula milk can cause health problems for children. The WHO estimates that 4,000 babies a day die worldwide because they are not breast fed.

Patti Rindall of Baby Milk Action said: "People don't realise how extensive Nestle's

reach is. In fact, they own 8,500 brands and Nestle is using the success of these products to market baby milk.

"Nestle's promotion steers mothers and health workers away from breastfeeding and towards artificial feeding, contributing to unnecessary illness and, in conditions of poverty, to the death of infants.

"The decision to boycott the Perrier awards is a difficult one for artists but if they did it would send a very important message to Nestle."

Comedian Fred MacAnlay said he had attempted a boycott of the Perrier six years ago but on the grounds that it "ruins" the festival for comics.

He added: "A lot of people won't have made the connection between Perrier and Nestle, and won't know the issues. However, I would be surprised if comedians actually do boycott the awards as they are so well-established - even though the winners are never a surprise."

A spokesman for last year's Perrier winner, Rich Hall, refused to comment.

A spokesman for Nestle said the company abided by the WHO code everywhere but Europe, America, Canada and developed countries in Asia.



Comedian calls for a boycott on Perrier Awards and 'corporate power'

BY LOUISE JURY
Media Correspondent

THE PRESTIGIOUS Perrier Awards for comedy at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, which have launched the careers of some of Britain's top comics, should be boycotted because the sponsors are linked with food firm Nestlé, the comedian Rob Newman said yesterday.

Mr Newman, the former comedy partner of David Baddiel, called on other comedians to boycott the awards because of the controversy surrounding Nestlé's sales of powdered baby milk in the Third World - contending that breastfeeding should be encouraged instead.

Mr Newman is one of a number of celebrities, including Julie Walters, Emma Thompson and Richard E Grant, as well as the pop bands Pulp and Ocean Colour Scene, who are backing the lobbying group Baby Milk Action. The campaign believes that, if comedians refused to compete in the awards, it would increase pressure on the food firm.

Mr Newman, who has a new video out in the autumn



Comediennes Julie Walters and Emma Thompson are backing the lobbying group Baby Milk Action

which takes a sardonic look at multinational companies and globalisation, said: "I would certainly urge comedians at the festival fringe to boycott the awards this year because of the involvement of Nestlé. I regard this as a larger struggle against corporate power."

The Perrier Awards were launched 20 years ago when the Cambridge Footlights team, including Emma Thompson and Stephen Fry, won the honour. Frank Skinner, Steve Coogan and the League of Gentlemen are all previous

recipients. Rich Hall, an American, was last year's winner.

Perrier founded the awards in 1981 the year before the company was bought by Nestlé. The parent company has become the target of a fierce campaign by Baby Milk Action, which claims Nestlé is the worst offender among food internationals in terms of encouraging sales of formula milk to mothers who would be better off breastfeeding.

But Patti Rundall, the policy officer for Baby Milk Action, said although the focus of their

campaign was on baby milk, they were also concerned about the issue of clean water. She said Nestlé was promoting bottled water in poorer countries where what was needed was decent piped water.

The campaign hopes a boycott of the awards would raise awareness but Ms Rundall added she was aware of the importance of the awards to young comedians. She sympathised with those who felt they ought to take part. "It's just for those who want to join the boycott, it would be a brilliant way to alert people," she said.

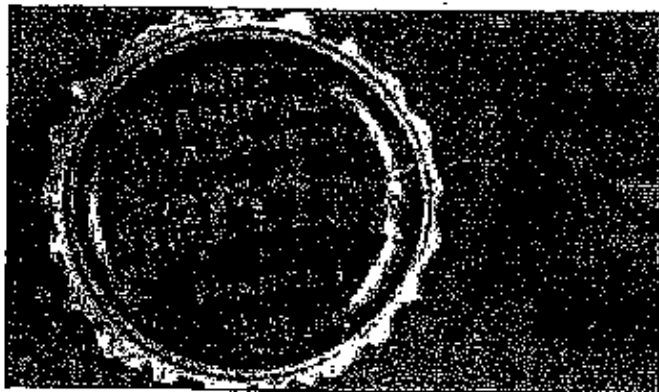
A spokeswoman for Nestlé said it was concerned at the message being given to comedians. "Nestlé markets its infant formula product responsibly, in line with the World Health Organisation's code of marketing. Many of the allegations made about our behaviour in the developing world are years out of date and have long since been rectified. Contrary to common belief, our marketing practices have changed."

She added that Nestlé did not advertise or promote infant formula in developing countries.



- Front Page
- World
- UK
- UK Politics
- Business
- Sci/Tech
- Health
- Education

Tuesday, 24 July, 2001, 15:59 GMT 16:59 UK
Comedian calls for prize boycott



Perrier Comedy awards: running since 1981

Stand-up comedian Rob Newman is calling for a boycott of the Perrier Comedy Awards at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, according to reports.

Speaking to The Independent newspaper, Newman said that the awards should be boycotted because sponsors Perrier are linked with food firm Nestlé.

Newman called on other comedians not to enter the competition because of Nestlé's sales of powdered baby milk in the Third World.

Newman believes that breastfeeding should be encouraged instead, the paper reports.

Lobbying group

As well as Newman, a number of other celebrities including Julie Walters, Emma Thompson and Richard E Grant are backing the lobbying group Baby Milk Action.

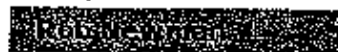
The group wants to increase pressure on the food firm by persuading as many top comedians as possible not to enter the competition.

Newman is releasing a new comic video soon, which focuses on multinational companies and globalisation.

Newman was formerly the comic partner of David Baddiel, as well as a member of The Mary Whitehouse Experience with Baddiel, Steve Punt and Hugh Dennis.

"I would certainly urge comedians at the festival fringe to boycott the awards this year because of the involvement of Nestlé. I regard this as a larger

"I regard this as a larger struggle against corporate power."



Al Murray is a past winner of the Perrier

Search BBC News Online

Advanced search options

- Search console for latest audio/video
- Advanced search options
- Advanced search options
- Advanced search options
- Advanced search options
- Advanced search options
- Advanced search options
- Advanced search options

See also:

- 27 Aug 00 | Entertainment Hall toasts Perrier prize
- 30 Aug 99 | Edinburgh Festival 99 Pub landlord draws Perrier prize
- 31 Aug 98 | Edinburgh Festival Tommy takes the Perrier
- 02 Sep 99 | Entertainment Mad about the boys
- 26 Aug 99 | Edinburgh Festival 99 The winner takes it all
- 24 Aug 98 | Edinburgh Festival Talents who sparked in comedy's Hall of Fame

Internet links:

- Edinburgh Festival Fringe
- The Perrier Awards
- The Unofficial Mary Whitehouse Experience
- The Mary Whitehouse Experience

The BBC is not responsible for the content of external internet sites

Top Showbiz stories now:

- Cruise and Kidman divorce next week
- Backstreet Boy extends rehab stay
- Actress joins call for Perrier boycott
- REM guitarist denies 'air rage' charges
- Boy band Five deny rift
- Thunderbirds going, going, gone
- Fleetley hangs up his shoes
- Jolie's Cambodian mission

Links to more Showbiz stories are at the foot of the page.

struggle against corporate power," Newman said to the paper.

Coveted prize

American comedian Rich Hall scooped the coveted Perrier Comedy award in 2000.

The prize is awarded to the most original and funny cabaret, revue or comedy act at the fringes.

Other Perrier winners, including Steve Coogan, Frank Skinner, Lee Evans, Sean Hughes, and The League of Gentlemen, have gone on to win wider recognition.

The awards have been running since 1981 when the Cambridge Footlights, which included Stephen Fry and Emma Thompson, won the inaugural contest.

To be eligible for the awards, acts must be original and fall into the cabaret, comedy, review or stand-up category.

[Links to more Showbiz stories](#)

In This Section



[^^ Back to top](#)

[News Front Page](#) | [World](#) | [UK](#) | [UK Politics](#) | [Business](#) | [Sci/Tech](#) | [Health](#) | [Education](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Talking Point](#) | [In Depth](#) | [AudioVideo](#)

[To BBC Sport>>](#) | [To BBC Weather>>](#)

[News Sources](#)

Thompson joins comedians' 'boycott' of Perrier Awards

BY LOUISE JURY
Media Correspondent

ONE OF the Edinburgh Festival's leading venues is setting up an alternative to the prestigious Perrier Awards for comedy - to be called the Tap Water prize - in protest at the working practices of the mineral water's manufacturer, Nestlé.

The Bongo Club's move follows the call by comedian Rob Newman for a boycott of the Perriers because of the controversy surrounding Nestlé's sales of powdered baby milk in the Third World.

Actress Emma Thompson, who won the Perrier Award in its first year as a member of the Cambridge Footlights, yesterday joined Mr Newman in asking comedians not to take part. Other former winners include Frank Skinner, Steve Coogan and the League of Gentlemen.

"The Perrier Awards should be boycotted by all right-thinking people, because Nestlé has got to be stopped," she said.

Emma Thompson, like Rob Newman, is a supporter of Baby Milk Action, a campaign encouraging breast-feeding instead of using powdered milk. Scottish supporters are already



Emma Thompson: Nestlé has got to be stopped'

planning to picket the award-winners' ceremony on 26 August. And the Bongo Club, which is operated by a charity and runs a mixed programme of entertainment and comedy, has decided to have no involvement with the Perrier Awards in the Edinburgh Festival which starts this weekend.

All comedy performers at the giant venue in New Street have been asked to agree not to accept a Perrier award if their show is nominated.

Among those already booked to appear are Jamie Glassman, one of the team behind the AH G show, Joel

Spence and Douglas Frawley, in a show *One Night Only*, "depicting male identity in crisis at the beginning of the 21st century". John Sinclair, a leading Scottish comedian, appears in *Bagpipes and Angels* in a show billed as "quality nonsense".

Suzanne Merrall, a coordinator for the Bongo Club, said details of the alternative Perrier Awards were still being finalised. But although the evening would be light-hearted, she said their point was not. "There is a problem that people don't know Perrier is owned by Nestlé, but as soon as we realised we wanted to do something," she said.

Mark Thomas, the comedian and another supporter of Baby Milk Action, may also enter the Tap Water Awards where the winner is likely to receive a tap and runners-up a glass of water.

Nestlé has tried to reassure protesters. The giant company has been accused of promoting infant formula in developing countries in breach of the World Health Organisation's code on marketing. "Many of the allegations are years out of date and have long since been rectified," a spokesman said.



amazing savings

50% off bestselling books

bestselling CDs for £9.99

50% off bestselling software
Yahoo! Headline
[Home](#) [Top Stories](#) [World](#) [Ireland](#) [Business](#) [Politics](#) [Entertainment](#) [Tech](#) [Science](#) [Sport](#) [Full Coverage](#)
[Reuters](#) | [Email News](#) | [Amanya](#) | [Sky News](#) | [Film Reviews](#) | [Music](#) | [TV](#) | [Games](#) | [Photos](#)

Tuesday July 31, 06:23 PM

Comics pour cold water on Perrier Awards

By Ed Cropley



Click to enlarge photo

EDINBURGH (Reuters) - The flizz is fast going out of the prestigious Perrier Comedy Awards, the high point of Edinburgh's Fringe arts festival, as leading thespians call for a boycott of the event in protest at sponsor company Nestle.

Oscar-winning actress Emma Thompson, who won the award in its first year as a member of the Cambridge Footlights revue, added her name on Tuesday to a growing list of artists who disapprove of the Swiss food giant's marketing tactics.

Campaigners say Nestle, which owns the sparkling water brand Perrier, puts babies' lives at risk by aggressively promoting breast-milk substitutes in developing countries.

Nestle denies the allegations.

"The Perrier Awards should be boycotted by all right-thinking people because Nestle has got to be stopped," Thompson said through her agent.

Lobbying group Baby Milk Action says some 1.5 million infants die each year because they are not breastfed. Where water is unsafe, a bottle-fed child is more likely to die as a result of diarrhoea than a breastfed child.

Supporters include actors Robert Newman, Julie Walters and Richard E. Grant and pop bands Pulp and Ocean Colour Scene.

Nestle, which has been criticised alongside other multinational baby food companies, said it promoted its infant food responsibly and in line with World Health Organisation codes of conduct.

"Many of the allegations made about our behaviour are years out of date and have long since been rectified," the company said in a statement issued in London.

To fill the Perrier Awards gap, a group of comedians at Edinburgh's madcap Fringe arts festival has joined a rival award at the Bongo Club, a funky blues and dance venue in the heart of Edinburgh.

Details of the fledgling Tap Water Awards are still sketchy, but organisers hope to raise awareness of the problems of over-marketed bottled water in the world's poorest countries.

"It's still in the developing stages, and we haven't fixed a final date for the awards but the winner will get a tap and the runners up will get a recyclable plastic beaker of water," said Bongo Club festival coordinator Suzanne Merrall.

The Perrier Awards, now in their 20th year, have been the launch-pad for many a career in British comedy including Steve Coogan, Frank Skinner, laconic U.S. comedian Rich Hall and 'pub landlord' Al Murray.

[Email this article](#) - [View most sent articles](#)

 More From > [Entertainment](#)

 Previous Story: [Focus - Director Gary Marshall's big challenge - a "G" rating \(Reuters\)](#)

 Next Story: [AOL and Vivendi hit sour note on 3 Tenors marketing \(Reuters\)](#)

More Yahoo!

- [Music](#)
- [Horoscopes](#)
- [TV Guide](#)
- [Yahoo! Books](#)

Search

Bid, buy & sell

You are in: Entertainment: Showbiz
Tuesday, 31 July, 2001, 18:59 GMT 19:59 UK
Actress joins call for Perrier boycott

Front Page
World
UK

UK Politics
Business
Sci/Tech
Health
Education
Entertainment
Showbiz
Music
Film
Arts

TV and Radio
New Media
Reviews
Talking Point
In Depth
AudioVideo

SPORT
World



Thompson won a Perrier award in 1981

Oscar-winning actress Emma Thompson has added her name to the performers calling for a boycott of the Perrier Comedy Awards at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

The action began when stand-up comedian Rob Newman told The Independent newspaper that the awards should be boycotted because sponsors Perrier are linked with food firm Nestlé.

Thompson, who won the award in its inaugural year with the Cambridge Footlights, added her voice to the campaign on Tuesday.

"The Perrier Awards should be boycotted by all right-thinking people because Nestlé has got to be stopped," Thompson said through her agent on Tuesday.

A number of celebrities have publicly asked comedians not to enter the competition because of Nestlé's sales of powdered baby milk in the Third World.

Campaigners believe that breast-feeding should be encouraged in developing countries as bottle-fed babies are more likely to die of water borne infections.

Allegations

Nestlé has rejected the criticisms, saying it promotes infant foods in line with World Health Organisation codes of conduct.

"Many of the allegations made about our behaviour are years out of date and have long since been rectified," the company said in a statement issued in London.

A number of other celebrities including Julia Walters, Richard E Grant and pop bands Pulp and Ocean Colour Scene are backing the lobbying group Baby Milk Action.



Thompson won a best actress Oscar for Howard's End

Search BBC News Online

Advanced search options

Launch search options for latest search engines

- 40 BBC RADIO NEWS
- 38 BBC ONE TV NEWS
- 40 WORLD NEWS SUMMARY
- 38 BBC NEWS 24 BULLETIN
- PROGRAMMES GUIDE

See also:

- 27 Aug 00 | Entertainment Hall toasts Perrier prize
- 30 Aug 99 | Edinburgh Festival 99 Pub landlord draws Perrier prize
- 31 Aug 98 | Edinburgh Festival Tommy takes the Perrier
- 02 Sep 99 | Entertainment Mad about the boys
- 26 Aug 99 | Edinburgh Festival 99 The winner takes it all
- 24 Aug 98 | Edinburgh Festival Talents who sparked in comedy's Hall of Fame
- 24 Jul 01 | Showbiz Comedian calls for prize boycott
- 06 Dec 99 | Entertainment Baby.com for actress Emma
- 30 May 01 | Showbiz Thompson heads for Africa

Internet links

- Edinburgh Festival Fringe The Perrier Awards
 - Emma Thompson - fan site
- The BBC is not responsible for the content of external internet sites

Top Showbiz stories now:

- Cruise and Kidman divorce next week
- Backstreet Boy extends rehab stay
- Actress joins call for Perrier boycott
- REM guitarist denies 'air rage' charges
- Boy band Five deny rift
- Thunderbirds going, going, gone
- Flatley hangs up his shoes
- Jolie's Cambodian mission

Links to more Showbiz stories are at the foot of the page.

The group wants to increase pressure on the food firm by persuading as many top comedians as possible not to enter the Perrier competition.

American comedian Rich Hall scooped the coveted Perrier Comedy award in 2000.

The prize, which is in its 20th year, is awarded to the most original and funny cabaret, revue or comedy act at the fringe.



Rich Hall saw off competition from 140 other acts in 2000

Other Perrier winners, including Steve Coogan, Frank Skinner, Lee Evans, Sean Hughes, and The League of Gentlemen, have gone on to win wider recognition.

The awards have been running since 1981 when the Cambridge Footlights, which included Stephen Fry and Emma Thompson, won the inaugural contest.

To be eligible for the awards, acts must be original and fall into the cabaret, comedy, review or stand-up category.

[Links to more Showbiz stories](#)

In This Section  **60**



[^^ Back to top](#)

[News Front Page](#) | [World](#) | [UK](#) | [UK Politics](#) | [Business](#) | [Sci/Tech](#) | [Health](#) | [Education](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Talking Point](#) | [In Depth](#) | [AudioVideo](#)

[To BBC Sport>>](#) | [To BBC Weather>>](#)

[News Sources](#)



Press Release

Celebrities call for boycott of Nestle Perrier award at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival

Press Release: 31 July 2001

Top UK comedy performers and film stars are calling for up-and-coming acts to boycott the Nestlé Perrier Award at the current Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Emma Thompson, Rob Newman, Julie Christie and Victoria Wood are amongst those calling for the boycott to highlight Nestlé's aggressive marketing of breastmilk substitutes which contributes to the unnecessary death and suffering of infants around the world by undermining breastfeeding. According to UNICEF reversing the decline in breastfeeding could save the lives of 1.5 million infants around the world every year.

Emma Thompson said: *"The Perrier Awards should be boycotted by all right-thinking people, because Nestlé has got to be stopped."*

The Perrier Awards started in 1981 and have helped many household names up the ladder, including Emma Thompson, who was one of the first winners. But since the company was bought out by the 49 billion Swiss food giant Nestlé in 1992, it became just another of the company's 12,000 brands and inevitably embroiled in global politics. The Boycott of the award started spontaneously after Rob Newman made the initial call in Scotland on Sunday on 22nd July and has rapidly gained support and attracted publicity.

Victoria Wood said: *"Comedians can manage without the Perrier Award and the world should be able to manage without Perrier. I support the Boycott."*

Victoria Wood also raised the environmental impact of bottling water: *"The idea that the only way to get clean drinking water is to pay for some in a bottle is appalling. No-one has the right to corner the world's drinking supply, that's like something from science fiction. I very happily drink tap water most of the time. I'm not comfortable about the waste involved in producing a plastic bottle just so I can drink something I can get from a tap."*

When Nestlé launched its 'Pure Life' brand of bottled water in Pakistan its aggressive promotion campaign was criticised for undermining efforts to provide piped drinking water for all (see report in [Boycott News 25](#)). In the US Perrier is the target of a boycott because of its environmental impact (see [Save America's Water](#)). [WWF](#) has recently launched a report on the environmental impact of bottled water.

An alternative 'Tap Water' award has been launched by the Bongo Club. According to the *Sunday Herald* (5th August): *"The Bongo Club, a popular Edinburgh venue hosting the Tap Water Awards, will host 19 music and comedy acts which have agreed to boycott Perrier. The new prize will be used to help cash-strapped comics fund shows at Edinburgh. Bongo coordinator Suzanne Merrill said 'I'm hoping that we can really establish the Tap Water Awards as an alternative, and encourage people to use comedy to raise awareness. We are hoping to take it further and make it an award for all the other comedy festivals around the world. If we can make it global, we can see that really having an effect on Perrier and Nestlé'"*

Patti Rundall OBE, Policy Director at Baby Milk Action, said: *"For over 20 years we have been raising awareness of the harm that Nestlé's marketing has on infant health, and bringing in controls to stop them doing harm. I know this new Perrier Boycott will cause problems for some up and comedians, but I hope they will understand that its also a fantastic opportunity to do something that could make a difference globally. There must be room at Edinburgh for a non-corporate event."*

"At least now more people are aware of the complications with nestle Sponsorship - not only with baby foods, but many of its foods and drinks. By pushing bottled water aggressively as Nestle does, companies can undermine the impetus to provide cheap safe water to those who need it most.

"I'm glad that there are Comedians who are prepared to see through this - and take a principled stand."

Nestlé employs a team of staff to counter the international Nestlé boycott, which has been launched by groups in 20 countries (most recently in Cameroon by a national NGO which found Nestlé promoting breastmilk substitutes at health facilities with film shows).

Nestlé falsely claims that its critics refer to marketing practices it has now stopped. In reality the evidence demonstrates Nestlé malpractice continues in a systemic and institutionalised manner. An international monitoring report launched at the World Health Assembly in May 2001 shows Nestlé to be responsible for more violations of the marketing standards adopted by the Assembly than any other company (see the IBFAN report [Breaking the Rules 2001](#)).

Nestlé rejected a Baby Milk Action four-point plan for saving infant lives and ultimately ending the boycott in March 2001. (see [Boycott News 29](#)).

For more information contact [Mike Brady](#) or [Patti Rungall](#) at Baby Milk Action, 23 St Andrews Street, Cambridge, CB2 3AX, tel: +44 1223 464420, fax: +44 1223 464417

Reports on the web (updated 6th August)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/entertainment/showbiz/newsid_1465000/1456

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/entertainment/showbiz/newsid_1467000/1467

http://uk.biz.yahoo.com/01_0731/80/c02ez.html

<http://www.independent.co.uk/story.jsp?story=84998>

<http://www.sundayherald.com/17399>

Notes for editors:

1. For news of other celebrity endorsers see [Boycott News 29](#).
2. Baby Milk Action is a non-profit organisation which aims to save infant lives and to end the avoidable suffering caused by inappropriate infant feeding. Baby Milk Action works within the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) - a coalition of more than 150 citizen and health worker groups in more than 90 countries around the world. IBFAN works for better child health and nutrition through the promotion of breastfeeding and the elimination of irresponsible marketing of infants foods, bottles and teats.
3. The WHO [International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes](#) was adopted by the World Health Assembly in 1981. Subsequent Resolutions have clarified interpretation and addressed changes in marketing practices and scientific knowledge.
4. The latest IBFAN report - [Breaking the Rules 2001](#) - was launched in May this year at the World Health Assembly to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the WHO [International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes](#). The report cites Code violations by artificial baby milk companies, including promotion via the internet. (The report can be purchased from Baby Milk Action's [Virtual Shop](#)).
5. Nestlé's assurances about its marketing practices do not stand up to scrutiny. In May 1999 the UK Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) upheld all of Baby Milk Action's complaints about an anti-boycott advertisement in which Nestlé claimed to market infant formula 'ethically and responsibly'. The two-year investigation was one of the longest in the ASA's history (see report in [Boycott News 25](#)).
6. In November 2000 Nestlé was the first company called to give evidence to the European Parliament Public Hearings on corporate responsibility. Nestlé refused to attend (see report in [Boycott News 29](#)).

Baby Milk Action is a member of the International Baby Food Action Network

Daily Scottish Mail

Thompson leads Perrier Award boycott

THE prestigious Perrier Award for comedy at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe is facing a boycott.

Actress Emma Thompson, herself a former winner of the accolade with Cambridge Footlights, called for the boycott over sales of powdered baby milk in the Third World.

Nestle, which owns Perrier, has been accused of breaching World Health Organisation

By Gavin Madeley

guidelines over its promotion of powdered milk. WHO fears that mothers are encouraged to use polluted water to dilute the powdered feeds, rather than breast-feeding, which carries fewer health risks.

The Oscar-winning actress backs an alternative prize, the Tap Water Award, set up by the Bongo Club, one of the

Fringe's main venues. Scots-born Miss Thompson, 41, said: "The Perrier Award should be boycotted by all right-thinking people, because Nestle has got to be stopped."

She joined fellow comedian Rob Newman yesterday in urging comics to refuse the award, whose previous winners include Frank Skinner and Steve Coogan.

Miss Thompson and Mr New-

man are both supporters of Baby Milk Action, a campaign encouraging breast-feeding instead of powdered milk. Supporters are already planning to picket the award ceremony on August 25.

Nestle has mounted a charm offensive in an effort to placate protesters. A spokesman said: "Many of the allegations are years out of date and have long since been rectified."



A funny thing happened on the way to the Festival

Has the Edinburgh Festival been overrun by comedians?

Bruce Dessau

investigates.

And opposite, on the eve of this year's mammoth arts fest, Evening Standard critics select their must-sees

'The cliché is that the Perrier is a stepping stone to stardom. In reality, it benefits from the inherent laziness of the TV world'

EVERY August London's comedy circuit virtually shuts up shop and moves to Edinburgh. The reason for this is the Perrier Awards, the fizzy (naturally) Oscars of the UK comedy world, which are generally perceived as the springboard to comic recognition and glory. This year almost 200 acts are vying for Perrier attention.

It was all so different 20 years ago, when Rowan Atkinson presented the first Perrier Award to a bunch of newcomers from Cambridge including Stephen Fry, Hugh Laurie, Emma Thompson and Tony Slattery at the end of their show. No one knew what the fuss was about. Literally. The audience thought the presentation was a cameo by the Not The Nine O'Clock News star in a sketch about silly awards.

Two decades on, when the next Perrier Award is handed over on 25 August, along with a cheque for £5,000 and the offer of a West End showcase, everyone will know what's going on.

Over the past two decades the lure

of the Perrier has ensured that comedy has become synonymous with the Edinburgh Fringe, which in turn has come to overshadow the older International Festival.

"The International Festival used to be the train that pulled the Fringe, but now it's the other way round," says William Burdett-Coutts, who has been putting on shows at the Assembly Rooms since 1981. This year his extensive line-up includes a chat show by Clive Anderson and stand-up from Alan Davies.

Some feel that Perrier's status exerts a disproportionate stranglehold, but the Fringe is much more than a bunch of laughs — not least numerically. This year, for example, there are 269 comedies and revues but more than 600 different theatrical shows, plus Kiwi popsmith Neil Finn heading the musical menu. There are also some more recent comedy-award upstarts getting in on the act such as Open Mic and Channel 4's So You Think You're Funny — but they're small beer in comparison.

Perrier drowns out all other activities during the festival, which

inevitably leads to a variety of protests. This year Rob Newman and the group Baby Milk Action — also supported by Emma Thompson — has initiated the Tap Water Award, because Perrier is owned by Nestlé, which makes powdered baby milk, the presence of which

in Africa is much frowned on. Edinburgh's regular comedy club, The Stand, has tried to opt out of Perrier by asking for its acts not to be considered, while anarchic Greenwich comedian Malcolm Hardee has in the past run the Snakebite Award, although this was not for political motives but because he is a shameless self-publicist.

In some people's eyes, comedy attracts the crowds and means good business all round. Burdett-Coutts believes that the Perrier gives the circuit an annual focus: "It's the Wimbledon of the entertainment world. You have to be part of it. It is an incentive for acts to put together new work."

As talk turns to nominations in the penultimate week, the performers' agents lick their lips at the



ABC 441146 Daily
page rate £11,715.00
acc rate £55.00
020 7938 5000

BABY MILK

(04008-1)

Page 2 of 4

thought of their commission, while the stars-in-waiting sit back and wait for the offers to flood in.

Except, of course, it doesn't always work like that. I was a judge of the Perrier Awards twice in the mid-Nineties, and neither winner has gone on

to global showbiz domination. Jenny Eclair is now diversifying into writing after bits of television on C5 (though she's at Edinburgh again this year). Lano and Woodley headed back

to their native Australia and seemed to stay there, although they too are doing a 2001 run in Edinburgh. Harry Hill, Jack Dee and Eddie Izzard were only ever nominees — so much for victory

being the key to success.

Stewart Lee, best known for his work with Richard Herring, is snubbing Edinburgh

this year, ending a 14-year run. Instead, he is directing Jerry Springer: The Musical at the Battersea Arts Centre. Lee loves the Fringe but is not so keen on the Perrier as a way of talent-spotting. "Going to Edinburgh to get noticed is an insane way of building a career because the people that spot you are going to be the kind of television executives who go to Edinburgh in the hope of being fed a success. They sign someone who has done well, like Rich Hall or Johnny Vegas, and rush them into a badly thought-out pilot."

Lee also suggests that there is no real link between stand-up skill and television talent: "Look at Chris Morris or Dom Joly. Neither would particularly work in a live environment." (Former wacky champions such as Frank Skinner, The League of Gentlemen and Lee Evans have, however, thrived on TV.) Burdett-Coutts is less cynical about the television world but agrees that it tends to prefer Perrier acts over unsung heroes playing a school hall in the Edinburgh suburbs (winners have invariably come from the three main comedy venues, the Assembly Rooms, Pleasance and Gilded Balloon, with the merest sprinkling of outsiders).

If in doubt, commissioning editors use Perrier to reassure themselves that they're making the right decisions. "The nature of television is that it is insecure. It doesn't like committing itself until something has had a degree of public success. That endorsement makes a lot of difference."

The cliché is that the Perrier is a stepping stone to stardom. In reality, it benefits from the inherent laziness of the television world. There are plenty of shows in London every week, but Edinburgh is the chosen hunting ground. Producers and commissioning editors are probably there for the annual Television Festival anyway. If they can drag themselves away from networking, otherwise known as drinking, at the George Hotel bar, they can do an instant trawl. It is efficient and convenient but it will never throw up anyone truly different.

So, what's in store for the next Perrier winner? This year there is no clear favourite, but one dead cert. A French water company is going to get a lot of very cheap advertising in Scotland this summer.

● *The Perrier short list will appear in the West End in October.*

BBC 6 O'clock news piece on Perrier Boycott, Friday 3rd August 2001.

Length 2 mins 10 secs

PTC studio (graphic of Perrier Award)

Studio: Now it's Britain's most prestigious comedy award and it has launched the careers of household names such as Stephen Fry and Frank Skinner. But this year stars like Victoria Wood, Emma Thompson and Julie Christie are urging young comedians to boycott it. Our Arts correspondent David Sillito reports on why the Edinburgh festival's Perrier Awards are suddenly falling flat.

CA of Pré te au Gauche.

VO: Pré te au Gauche. French rappers, from England, who would like a Perrier. *(CA to last years award winners)* That is the biggest prize in British comedy. But this year some well established stars are saying they should boycott the award *(CA Victoria Wood walking into a reception area)*, and not worry about prizes.

TH Victoria Wood

Victoria: It doesn't matter they've already got a break if they're in Edinburgh. Its turned into a complete corporate event. If somebody's good you know they're going to get on, all the television producers are in Edinburgh anyway.

(CA someone reading leaflet)

VO: And it's all because Perrier's parent company Nestlé sells baby milk powder in the third world *(CA someone handing out leaflets)* which it is alleged encourages women to abandon breastfeeding. Nestlé says the allegations are out of date, but not everyone is convinced.

PTC presenter walking up stairs into Bongo club

Presenter: Of course at this venue this is as far as the Perrier judges are going to be allowed, because this *(Pan to Bongo club sign)* is the Bongo club and the only award any comedian is going to get is the tap water award. *(Pan back to Presenter holding up Tap)*.

CA track along window to someone painting tap

VO: But their alternative Tap Water Award will hardly compare with a Perrier. Introducing politics into comedy is making many feel uncomfortable.

TH Jenny Eclair

Jenny: It's inevitable that if the award does go ahead whoever wins it will have to give it back, even though their heart is going mine, mine. So it's a really really tricky thing and I'm very glad that I'm not in the running actually.

CA Audience laughing and performer

VO: And behind the laughter, there are other deeper worries about a festival that desperately needs sponsors to survive.

TH Nica Burns, Director of Perrier Comedy Award

Nica: Perrier are fantastic sponsors of comedy and I think the two areas should be kept separate.

CA masked performers outside Assembly rooms

VO: This after all is all about business. Show business. And at Edinburgh 2001, Sponsors are very welcome, politics isn't *(CA masked bouncer shooing the camera away)*. David Sillito, BBC News at the Edinburgh festival.



Politics on the Fringe is no laughing matter

Stars' call for boycott of Perrier comedy award fails to find support as young talents gather in Edinburgh



Rob Newman and Emma Thompson, protesting against Perrier award sponsor Nestlé. Right, last year's winner, Rich Hall
Half Photographs: Jayne Houghton, Dara Khazal, Murdo MacLeod

Flachra Gibbons
Arts correspondent

How many comedians does it take to watch a man drown? Two. One to make sure he doesn't get out of the water, and the other to play it for laughs.

It may be one of the oldest and most bitter jokes comedians tell against themselves, but this weekend on the Edinburgh Fringe they appear to be living up to their own cruel stereotype.

For calls for a boycott of the Perrier award, the prize that launched the careers of Frank Skinner, Steve Coogan and the League of Gentlemen, in protest at its owner Nestlé's sales of powdered baby milk in developing countries, have not only fallen on deaf ears, they have spawned a backlash.

Rob Newman and Emma Thompson, who with Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie appeared in the Cambridge Footlights show that won the first Perrier award, urged young comedians to put their consciences before their careers and shun the awards.

Both she and Newman are supporters of Baby Milk Action, which claims that infant formula milk kills babies in the developing world because water supplies are often contaminated. The campaign, which encourages breastfeeding instead, has accused Nestlé of breaching the World Health Organisation code on marketing baby milk.

But not only has their appeal been generally ignored, the pair have found themselves the object of wrath. Only one small venue, the Bongo Club,

has responded by setting up its own alternative Tap Water awards, while some of the biggest names on the fringe have condemned Newman and Thompson as "misguided and mean-spirited".

Addison Crosswell, the promoter who has guided three comies to Perrier victory, including last year's winner, Rich Hall, said their interventions "stank of the old farts syndrome that Edinburgh seems to bring out in some older comies. As Johnny Rot-

ten said, 'If the music's too loud, you are too old.' I like Rob, he's a good guy, and I can see his point, but for years he did gigs sponsored by some terrible beer and it is a bit rich now for him to come and do his big eco-warrior thing and

ask younger comies in their early twenties to give up their big chance for the sake of his conscience."

Hall, who won last year with his jallbird crooner persona Ollie Lee Crenshaw, said a boycott would be pointless. He

said his only objection to the Perrier was that it was named after a corporate brand, but it was difficult to find a single big company without a skeleton in its cupboard. "I don't think it would make a difference to mothers in Africa

whether there was a Perrier award or not."

The prize's organiser, Nica Burns, said every year someone tries to "do down" the Perrier, and now that both Newman and Thompson had made their point they should "leave it be". None of this year's Perrier favourites, who include Ross Noble and Johnny Vegas, are expected to boycott the prize.

A Nestlé spokeswoman said the company complied with all WHO guidelines on the sale of infant formula milk and no longer advertises it in the developing world. "Many of the allegations made about our behaviour in the developing world are years out of date."

As if by comic timing, the World Wildlife Fund yesterday urged consumers to drink tap rather than mineral water, to save the environment.

Edinburgh woke up this morning to its biggest Fringe, with 1,462 shows from nearly 50 countries. As well as the traditional Fringe Saturday, when performers give a free taste of their shows to city residents, this year 80,000 tickets are being given away on the first weekend in a "two-for-one" deal bankrolled by the Scottish Arts Council's national lottery fund. It is designed to encourage locals to give the world's biggest arts festival a go.

The prospect of more government funding next year seems to have sparked a theatre renaissance, with the number of companies performing up by a quarter to 592.



Rows that rocked Edinburgh

Stars call for boycott of Perrier awards!



2001 Stars including Emma Thompson (pictured), Victoria Wood and Richard E Grant call on comics to boycott the Perrier Comedy Awards in protest at Perrier owner Nestlé's marketing of powdered milk in the Third World.

Earl attacks 'tasteless' Diana video!



2000 Earl Spencer criticises a 10-minute film in which a lookalike of his sister, Diana, Princess of Wales, suggestively eats chocolate and opens her legs in a pastiche of the Sharon Stone interrogation scene from "Basic Instinct".

Fury at festival joke over Holocaust!



2000 American comic Scott Capurro outrages Jewish members of his audience by exclaiming: "Holocaust, Schmolocaust - can't they find anything else to whine about?" Later he vowed to write more material along the same lines.

Live maggots leave audiences aghast!



1997 The Kamikaze Freakshow angers local people when performers hurl live maggots into an audience that includes children. One disgusted onlooker said: "Filth like this should never be allowed at the festival."

Japanese 'Kama Sutra' dance outrages locals!



1996 Veteran Edinburgh councillor Moira Knox is appalled after learning that Japanese-Indian dancer Shakti is staging a one-woman show based on the "Kama Sutra". The performer describes the act as a "sensual experience".

Testicle stunt prompts mass walk-out!



1994 Daredevil Mark Faje narrowly obtains health and safety approval for an act in which he balances a lawnmower on his chin, while there is a mass walk-out from a show performed by the Jim Rose Circus (pictured), in which a man hangs an iron from his pierced genitals.

Monday Herald - 05 August 2001

Perrier boycott's gone flat

Edinburgh's jamboree gets off to a flying start despite fears of a boycott by big-name comedians

By Jenifer Johnston and Juliette Garside

The threatened boycott of the Perrier Comedy Award at the Edinburgh Fringe seems to be losing ground with only one venue declining to support the boycott.

While several venue managers expressed a personal dislike of the policies of big companies, they said it would be unfair for them to disadvantage comedians who may be in the running for the high-profile prize.

Comedian Rob Newman began the controversy last week when he spoke out against the Fringe's most coveted prize, the Perrier Comedy Award, which is offered by a subsidiary of Nestlé, the food manufacturing giant.

'I regard this as a larger struggle against corporate power,' he said, calling for Nestlé to stop the controversial practice of selling powdered baby food in Africa.

Actress Emma Thompson, who won the inaugural prize in 1981 added her support to the issue. In calling on young comedians to put their consciences before their careers the Oscar-winning actress said: 'The Perrier Awards should be boycotted by all right-thinking people, because Nestlé has got to be stopped.' Thompson is a vocal supporter of the Baby Milk Action group, which has been campaigning against Nestlé for 20 years.

Actress Victoria Wood, who has worked in Africa with Comic Relief was also unequivocal in her support. 'Comedians can manage without the Perrier Award and the world should be able to manage without Perrier.'

'The idea that the only way to get clean drinking water is to pay for some in a bottle is appalling. No one has the right to hoard the world's drinking supply, that's like something from science fiction. I very happily drink tap water most of the time.'

The only venue prepared to speak out against Perrier is The Bongo Club, a popular venue that will host 19 music and comedy acts during the Fringe.

The club is organising its own prize-giving, the Tap Water Awards, and has asked all the comedians appearing at its events to boycott Perrier.

Patrons have been approached to fund the Tap Water Awards and the new prize will be used to help cash-strapped comedians at Edinburgh.

Event coordinator Suzanne Merrill said 'I'm hoping that we can really establish the Tap Water Awards as an alternative, and encourage people to use comedy to raise awareness.'

'We're hoping to take it further and make it an award for all the other comedy festivals around the world. If we can make it happen, we can see that really having an effect on Perrier and Nestlé.'

Nestlé demonstrators have threatened to make the Perrier winners run a gauntlet of disapproval when they turn up to collect their prizes at the Perrier comedy awards on August 25.

Comedian Stephen Richardson, director of the Pleasance Theatre, which has hosted appearances from Perrier winners of the last six years, said there were many complications in a potential boycott.

'I don't have a contractual arrangement with Perrier for the run of our events, but I believe that people have the absolute right to boycott over this if they feel they must.'

Richardson pointed out that Newman, who has never been nominated for the award, might feel differently if he was one of this year's rising stars. 'Rob Newman might not have been so keen to protest about it when he was a young comic. There are a lot of people who will be affected by any boycott and they have to be considered.'

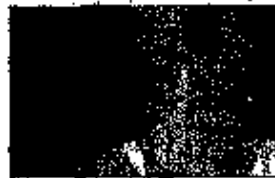
Rows that rocked Edinburgh

Stars call for boycott of Perrier awards!



2001 Stars including Emma Thompson (pictured), Victoria Wood and Richard E. Grant call on comics to boycott the Perrier Comedy Awards in protest at Perrier owner Nestlé's marketing of powdered milk in the Third World.

Earl attacks 'tasteless' Diana video!



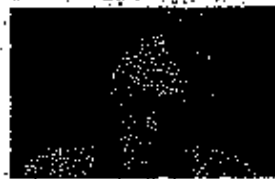
2000 Earl Spencer criticises a 10-minute film in which a lookalike of his sister, Diana, Princess of Wales, suggestively eats chocolate and opens her legs in a pastiche of the Sharon Stone interrogation scene from "Basic Instinct".

Fury at festival joke over Holocaust!



2000 American comic Scott Capurro outrages Jewish members of his audience by exclaiming: "Holocaust, Schmolocaust - can't they find anything else to whine about?" Later he vowed to write more material along the same lines.

Live maggots leave audiences aghast!



1997 The KaniKaze Freakshow angers local people when performers hurl live maggots into an audience that includes children. One disgusted onlooker said: "Filth like this should never be allowed at the festival."

Japanese 'Kama Sutra' dance outrages locals!



1996 Veteran Edinburgh councillor Moira Knox is appalled after learning that Japanese-Indian dancer Shakti is staging a one-woman show based on the "Kama Sutra". The performer describes the act as a "sensual experience".

Testicle stunt prompts mass walk-out!



1994 Daredevil Mark Faje narrowly obtains health and safety approval for an act in which he balances a lawnmower on his chin, while there is a mass walk-out from a show performed by the Jim Rose Circus (pictured), in which a man hangs an iron from his pierced genitals.



ABC 92436 Daily
page rate £10,300.00
ecc rate £23.00
0131 620 8620

Nestle

(D4008-1)

When a thousand worlds collide

by Mike Wade

TOURISTS blowing through the streets like litter, performers and impresarios moaning about money, and all the while the big parade is meandering around the capital.

From its now familiar staggered start, The Edinburgh Festival season is officially open for business - just as its Jazz Festival is come to an end.

It is the city of a thousand worlds where some have sweet dreams of stardom and others a critical eye on profit. For the rest the throng it's a hoot and a lachar, something to savour and somewhere to overspend.

And the hoo-haa over the festival, it is the International Festival which remains the fundamental stone of excellence, fundamentally because it lives up to its billing and remains truly international in scope.

It is not in itself remarkable that Theatre Vidy-Lausanne could perform Heiner Müller's *Hausfrau*, or that the Vienna Burgtheater will produce plays by Chekhov and Thomas Bernhard. What is wonderful though is they should appear now, together, alongside companies from Antwerp, Montreal and London.

The operatic bill is even more ambitious and includes a production of James MacMillan's *Phenomena* at the Queen's Hall, *Les Troyens*, Hector Berlioz's *Les Troyens*, run over two evenings at Usher Hall, and *Die Walküre*,

the second part of Richard Wagner's *Ring* cycle, performed by Scottish Opera after the company's triumph last year with *Das Rheingold*. Together they

represent exactly what a festival is for - bringing the world together to celebrate art.

For the folks who choose to live in the city all year round, inevitably much of the drama passes them by. *Rembrandt's Women* isn't the talk of the local steamie, and at the Foot o' the Walk they aren't humming airs

from *die Zauberflöte*. Instead it's the great set-pieces of the Festival which catch the imagination, the fireworks that end it and the grand procession which opens proceedings.

To mark yesterday's great cavalcade Edinburgh's council had maintained their traditional ban on fly-posting. The city fathers might be hoovering up the tourist dollars, but don't imagine they welcome the playbills which lure the audiences: overstep the mark, and venues could lose their licences.

But even if the city council has ticked the "no publicity" box, the Fringe is, we're told, on the up. Buoyed by a two-for-one promotion, ticket sales have risen by 50 per cent and if the book and film festivals aren't quite as fortunate, they too report a significant rise in interest and more bums on seats.

All this is manna from heaven for the Edinburgh and Lothians Tourist Board, but the impression lingers that the streets

aren't quite as full this year, as the baleful effect of foot-and-mouth works itself out on Edinburgh audiences.

Still, there's been no impact on incomes, according to Fringe Director Paul Gudgin, who reports a rise in revenue of £242,000 on last year. "Proof, if it were needed, that Edinburgh

is the only place to be in August," he says, forgetting that some people prefer to soak up rays, not rain.

More fool the folks on the beach, Gudgin might counter, for this year's Fringe bill is undeniably impressive in scale. A total of 666 groups from 49 countries are performing 1,462 shows.

As usual the place is awash with controversy - a shocking play here, a controversial sponsor there - and the annual ticket price argument is already bubbling up nicely.

To counter the trend of rising prices, one venue, the Stand, has held its prices so "ordinary" people can afford them.

But Tommy Shepherd's club is not the only venue packing in the comedians. As the small screen stars of the future try to make their names, the city is filling up with TV executives, trawling the theatres for talent.

Muddying the waters of entertainment is the first grand gesture of the fringe. Senior juvies Rob Newman, Emma Thompson and Victoria Wood called for a boycott of the Per-



rier Awards, because baby milk powder manufacturers firm Nestle owns the bottled water brand. As it turned out The Bongo Club was the only venue to back the protesters, and you can be sure Edinburgh's comics will storm the barricades only if they aren't nominated for the comedy prize.

More argument was stirred up by the annual attempt to shock the crowd. This year's bad taste award is almost certain to go to *The Age of Consent*, a production which tackles issues

arising from the murder of James Bulger and runs at the Pleasance for two weeks.

Its Philadelphia-based writer Peter Morris has a big reputation

for real-life dramas and last year, with director Ed Dick, gave us *The Second Amendment Club*.

That was a play which made the most of the shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado. Though we are assured this year's offering is of genuine substance, it's hard not to discern a trend.

Last year's shocker, the *Puppetry of the Penis* is reprised, and there are plenty of other pro-

ductions which labour under the impression that genitalia and sex are intrinsically funny, or shocking, or both. Which of course they are at Festival time.

The International Book Festival at Charlotte Square Gardens begins on 11 August, with various writers taking part, including US novelist and commentator Gore Vidal and Zadie Smith, author of the award-winning debut novel *White Teeth*.

Scottish writers take centre stage too. Kate Atkinson, Iz Lochhead, Edwin Morgan and Christopher Brookmyre feature among the homegrown talent, while best-selling Scottish crime writers Ian Rankin and Val McDermid bring their dark arts out into the light.

A day after the book launch the Film Festival opens, featuring a premiere of *Gabriel and Me* by Billy Elliot screenwriter Lee Hall and starring Billy Connolly.

The festival also sees the UK debut of *The Pledge*, starring Jack Nicholson, and director Sean Penn will be in town to mark the event. Tourist board officials will hope Penn enjoys Scotland as much as his erstwhile soulmate Madonna - for the STB as much as anyone, Edinburgh is the land of opportunity.





Sex and the sins of the father visited upon capital



Simon Pia's Festival Diary

spia@scotsman.com

Word of mouth

We pick up where we left off last year in our usual highbrow fashion, deep in the underbelly of the sex industry. Sorry, but it was either that or Sir David Steel and Lady Judy upsetting box office staff and we didn't want to go there again. Neither do they, we hope.

But, honestly, we had no choice as when we turned up at our first Festival event, the launch of the Gilded Balloon, we made a beeline for our guru. However the doyen of diarists, John Gibson of the *Evening News*, just happened to be engrossed with a 6ft woman in a basque, rubber pants and fishnet stockings who turned out to be a vicar's daughter. We kid you not.

Ellen Collier, 24, is a "Festival virgin" she informed us, tapping our chest firmly with her whip. The graduate from London Academy of Performing Arts' ambition is a Fringe First for Lip* Service, a new play by Gary Humphreys and Philip Sington.

"You know telephone sex lines are a £1.4 billion industry in Britain."

"Really? You seem to know a lot about it."

"Well, I worked on a sex line for six weeks".

Aha, a true method actor.

Lip* Service received good reviews in London where it was directed by Maggie Law, Jude's maw. Stephen Spielberg almost

had a close encounter, but couldn't get in as it was sold out.

Meanwhile if the play is half as interesting as Ellen's tales of her research - funny, sad and pathetic (that's the men) - it's worth a visit.

Parody of manners

It's a family affair at the Fest, what with Karen Koren interrupting her launch of the Gilded Balloon for another launch, the arrival of another Karen.

How many of those running a venue can boast: "We are a grandmother".

Not "Joe Mangal" aka our favourite ever *Neighbours* character (but that was before Kylie started wearing hot pants), who elsewhere is maintaining the Olivier/Redgrave tradition. Mark Little's little lads - Angus, 19, and Jasper, 16 - are appearing on the Fringe in *Dead People Laughing*, "a parody of youth culture".

But young Jasper is a parody of good manners, as we found out when he made disgusting, sucking noises behind us in a cafe while we were conversing with the City's arts representative, Councillor Billy Fitzpatrick, standing in for recreation conveyor Steve "Phileas Fogg" Cardownie who was detained

elsewhere.

Young Jasper almost received a "Granton Tap", a disciplinary procedure named after a hostelry in Cilir. Fitzpatrick's ward.

Meantime, Mark believes yoots can "express disgust without going into the streets kicking in McDonald's windows". Ah, so that's what Jasper was up to.

Fizzing with anger

Global politics has also reared its head with talk of a Perrier boycott due to it being a subsidiary of Nestlé and the controversy over its sales of powdered baby milk to developing countries.

But as most luvvies - or rather comics - are as big a bunch of whores as we backs, don't expect a rush to the barricades as we're sure they can rationalise why they are ignoring it.

Then some may claim it's all right for the likes of Emma Thompson, who won the inaugural Perrier in 1981, to back the boycott as she's been there, done it etc. Mind you, we've always thought Emma is an excellent actress, but not very funny. At least the Bongo Club is out there on the edge, taking a stand as we are sure the Stand will against "the cartel". The Bongo is setting up its own Tap Water Awards. We raise our glass.

Artistic integrity

Some artists do indeed have integrity, such as Emma Williams. Having not long finished the film *Perole*

Officer with Steve Cougan, Omar Sharif and Jenny Agutter, Emma has turned down the premier at Odeon,

Leicester Square as she's too busy appearing in the Yorkshire Theatre of Performing Art's *Oliver*.

Starbom also beckons for Seth Meyers of *Boom Chicago*, who has just been invited to join the cast of *Saturday Night Live*. Seth appears in

two of the three *Boom Chicago* shows in Edinburgh before moving to New York in September to join *Saturday Night Live*.

Pre-dinner theatre

What is the Fringe coming to with TV chefs crashing the

party. OK, Fanny Craddock, a real star, and her doughnuts would have been more than welcome, but Ainsley Harriot or Anthony Worrall Thompson. Puh-leeze.

But relax, we are talking about Sanjoy Roy, the award-winning producer from Delhi who also runs a heavyweight charity for "railway children", who live on the tracks around Delhi station. Sanjoy has brought over an Indian dance and theatre programme. Back home he runs his own film and TV production company, and is also a TV chef.

"We had the most wonderful food at his flat in Scotland Street. We being about 50 people," our man Bob the gob tells us. "He is planning to have two more dinners while he is here - could be the hottest ticket in town." We're hope Sanjoy's chapatis and nan turn out like Fanny's. Her doughnuts were delicious.



BBC HOMEPAGE | SPORT | WEATHER | WORLD SERVICE | MY BBC

BBC NEWS

Search BBC News Online

GO

You are in: Entertainment: Arts
 Monday, 6 August, 2001, 18:10 GMT 19:10 UK
Fringe chief shrugs off controversy

- Front Page
- World
- UK
- UK Politics
- Business
- Sci/Tech
- Health
- Education
- Entertainment
- Showbiz
- Music
- Film
- Arts



Edinburgh Festival director Paul Gudgin: "The Perrier award is great"

By BBC News Online's Darren Waters

It may be only day two of the festival, but the fringe is already enveloped in two controversies. However, festival director Paul Gudgin looks a remarkably relaxed man.

As the stages go up in the main street of the city and as street performers make their way to their designated spots Paul Gudgin is busy doing a round of media interviews and ensuring that the festival runs as smoothly as possible.

He seems unconcerned that the premier comedy award, the Perrier, and one show, *The Age of Consent*, are stirring up a storm.

"It would not be the Fringe festival if there was not any controversy," he says.

It would not be the Fringe festival if there was not any controversy

Perrier boycott

Leading actors and comics, including Emma Thompson and Rob Newman, have called for a boycott of the Perrier award because of awards the sponsors have links with food firm Nestlé.

Campaigners believe the company's sales of powdered milk in developing countries discourages breast-feeding, which they consider healthier for babies.

"The Perrier award is great," says Mr Gudgin, dismissing the controversy with a wave of his hand.

"It's disappointing that someone whose career was helped by the Perrier is attacking it," he adds, referring to Thompson, who won the award in its inaugural year with the *Cambridge Footlights*.

The festival has also come under criticism for one play, *The Age of Consent*, which draws on the horrific murder of James Bulger in 1993 as inspiration.

The festival director is more concerned with keeping the festival running as smoothly as possible, which is



Artistic extravaganza

- Pianist's phone fury
- Enigma premières
- Apes' cinema surprise
- Full Monty follow-up
- Lessing lashes out
- Film faces city ban
- Archer backs hit
- Sierra visas denied
- 'Bulger' play defended

FEATURES

- Twisting with the Bard
- Office politics
- Naked ambition
- Green gene
- Overnight sensation
- Emo's missing fringe
- Space adventures
- Master producer

REVIEWS

- Dancing hooligans
- Explosive dynamite
- Baryshnikov's magic
- Koons: Kitsch king
- Clowning around
- Political comedy
- Reservoir runs dry
- Consent controversy

FESTIVAL DIARY

- Picture diary
- Fluff free
- Artistic overload
- Celebrity drought
- Rough reviews

WEBSITES

- BBC's EdFest
- Edinburgh Fringe
- Edinburgh Festivals
- Raw Edinburgh - comedy

See also:

03 Aug 01 | Arts
 Fringe venue boss slams funding

Top Arts stories now:

- Excellence award for Rowling
- Female fiction 'dumbs down'
- 'New' Beethoven work to première
- Diana 'stars' in Abused exhibition
- Elgin Marbles wrangle rumbles on
- Rattle confirmed as Berlin conductor

quite a task given the thousands of performers and events which make up the festival.

"It is the world's largest arts festival. It really takes over the city - anybody who comes here will notice that we take over Edinburgh for three weeks.

"The streets are full of performers and audiences and the whole city comes alive."

Responsibility

Most who balk at the level of organisation required to pull the festival off, but Mr Gudgin is unmoved at the responsibility.

"It is not a nightmare to organise because there is no artistic director who is choosing performers and the direction of the festival.

"We are here to act as a guide, as a hub to all the performances. We want to make it as easy as possible for people to see shows."

The festival draws in more than £43m into the city but yet the fringe receives only about £40,000 in subsidy from the Scottish Arts Council and city authorities.

"It is hard and many companies come to the fringe and will make no money or lose money.

"To the credit of the arts council and city they are looking at the issue," says Mr Gudgin.

An increased subsidy from the arts council could be used to reduce the cost of some ticket prices.

In its 55th year Mr Gudgin says he is most pleased by the growth in theatre this year.

"There is a lot of theatre in 2001 which is great because when the festival started it was mainly about theatre."

The trick to the festival is navigating a way through the thousands of performances which vary wildly in quality. None of the performances are vetted in advance by the organisers.

"You pay your money and



A banner at the opening parade of the festival

Unique Kerouac archives acquired
Pianist leaves stage over phone din

Links to more Arts stories are at the foot of the page.



You pay your money and you take your chance and there are some gems to be found



**Paul Gudgin
Festival director**

ABC 1032824 Daily
page rate £41,500.00
acc rate £96.00
0207 538 5000

Nestle

(D4008-1)

Stars boycott Fringe awards for comedy

Sponsor Perrier under attack from Third World campaigners

BY SAM LEITH

THE opening of the Edinburgh Fringe was soured yesterday by calls for a boycott of the Perrier Awards for comedy by a group of stars including Julie Christie, Victoria Wood and Emma Thompson.

The row stems from the sponsor's direct connection with the food multinational Nestlé. The demands for a boycott are also supported by the alternative comedian Rob Newman.

Nestlé, which owns the Perrier brand, has attracted criticism over its sales of powdered baby milk in Third World countries.

The organisers of the Baby Milk Action campaign, which alleges that Nestlé violates World Health Organisation codes on the marketing of infant formula, are preparing to picket the awards ceremony on Aug 25. Perrier is also under attack from environmentalists concerned about the "wastefulness" of the bottled water industry.

Christie, Thompson and Wood have offered their support after one Fringe venue, the charity-run Bongo Club, announced that it would be presenting an alternative set of awards, the Tap Water



Nothing to laugh at: Emma Thompson and Julie Christie

Awards in protest. It has asked all its performers for undertakings that they will have no involvement with Perrier.

Julie Christie said in a statement: "I hope that my and other comedians will think about these issues and decline to support the Perrier Awards."

Victoria Wood said: "Comedians can manage without the Perrier Award and the world should be able to manage without Perrier. I support the boycott. The idea that the only way to get clean drinking water is to pay for some in a bottle is appalling."

"I'm not comfortable about the waste involved in producing a

plastic bottle just so I can drink something I can get from a tap."

Thompson was one of the first winners of a Perrier award during her time with the Cambridge Footlights, but she said: "The Perrier Awards should be boycotted by all right-thinking people, because Nestlé has got to be stopped."

Others on the Fringe criticised the boycott as gesture politics, saying that it was unreasonable of established stars to expect young hopefuls to forgo the chance of a break that Perrier offers.

Nina Buras, organiser of the Perrier Awards, said before yesterday's launch lunch: "It's all very well for these major stars. People have either forgotten or don't know exactly what Edinburgh can do for performers."

"It's not just one person collecting a gong. Perrier has stuck with it while other awards have come and gone, and they've given a lot of people a lot of publicity."

"People are annoyed with this cause. It's not right or appropriate. It's not wanted. Push off and let us do what we're here to do."





Fizzy logic

Rich Hall won last year's Perrier award but hates corporate comedy. How does that add up, asks **Brian Logan**

Last year Rich Hall was a shoo-in for the Prize He'd Rather Not Promote, with a country music and comedy show that starred his grizzled jailbait alter ego, Otis Lee Crenshaw. Now, unlike past Perrier winners, the Montana man has returned to Edinburgh, with not one but two shows. "The award is their way of telling you not to come back," he says, "but I figured, fuck 'em." A televised version of his Otis routine is being broadcast next weekend, to be followed by an album in the autumn. Hall has a BBC2 show in the later stages of development. A veteran of the circuit, he's enjoying his Indian summer.

Success was never likely to change this most sanguine of stand-ups, but in the past week Hall's post-Perrier credibility has been more severely tested than that of any previous reigning champ. Calls from the comedian Rob Newman to boycott the Perrier in protest at its parent company Nestlé's practices in Africa have made the comedy fraternity squirm. Hall is more exposed than most: he can't condemn the prize without looking hypocritical, and he can't condone it without betraying the subversive personality he projects onstage. He tries, with only partial success, to split the difference. "To be at the festival and boycott the Perrier," he says, "would have a fairly negligible effect on starving women in Africa. I don't think they're sitting there saying, 'Oh, thank God some comedians in Edinburgh are boycotting the award. Maybe now I can breastfeed my child!'"

The controversy is an unhappy but unavoidable side effect, he suggests, of naming an award after its sponsor. "Here's the problem with the Perrier. Every time you say the word, you are helping them sell the drink. Therefore

it's good to avoid the word. In most other forms of entertainment - film, television - there are Grammys and Academy Awards. In comedy there's this corporate trademark." Hall is an outspoken critic of the corporatisation of stand-up. He's based in Britain, not in his native US, precisely because

America has institutionalised live comedy as merely a rung on the ladder to TV celebrity. "People here know you can put a mike up on the stage, and it's just a guy standing up there telling jokes and you don't need lights and two-for-one coupons and all the other shit that goes on in America. Americans are more interested in whether you're famous than whether you're funny." (Hall is famous in the US, but less as a comedian than as the writer of a series of novelty dictionaries of made-up words.)

Hall's new show, *The Terry Dullum Appeal*, can be seen as a cock snooked at those who mistake Perrier success for a passport to stardom. The late-night show, which Hall co-presents with fellow American Dave Fulton, is an "experimental" mock benefit gig in support of a Wisconsin child who may or may not have Tourette's syndrome. "We can't quite tell," Hall explains. "The guy may be a loudmouthed little prick. Either way we're gonna give him the money." It has not been scripted. Hall calls it "a variety show.

We're going to try out new things every night, which I think is the best thing to do if you're gonna come back [after winning the Perrier]."

Otis is back too; Hall calls those gigs "the cash cow". The character, a depressive, country-crooning ex-con whom Hall based on his own redneck relatives, won a legion of fans last year and one enemy: the Church of Scotland. "They condemned my song [about child molesting] without listening to it," says Hall, whose sympathies with Chris Morris over the Brass Eye furore. "What he did is completely above criticism. If, with comedy, you can go into an uncharted area and come out with something original, that's what makes it an art form."

Hall's victory in 2000 was greeted with widespread satisfaction precisely because he is such a comedian. "But in the end," he concedes, "you have to tell jokes. If you think you can change the world as a comedian then your career's ruined and you might as well go become a therapist or help fat people lose weight. But there's still got to be passion behind what you do and some desire to point out things in the world that make you angry."





SERVER SERVICE: Masked waiters staging a bizarre performance yesterday in ristorante Immortale — just one of the countless plays featuring in this year's Edinburgh Festival.

Milk campaign seeks Perrier boycott

CAMPAIGNERS called on comedians at the Edinburgh Festival yesterday to boycott the Perrier Comedy Awards over the involvement of the company's owner Nestle in promoting

instant formula milk in poor countries.

The Perrier Comedy Awards, which helped launch the careers of Stephen Fry, Frank Skinner, Steve Coogan and Sean Hughes, mark their 20th anniversary at this year's festival fringe.

But Baby Milk Action called for a boycott over Nestle's marketing of infant formula milk in the developing world.

The campaign says that the milk endangers the lives of infants where water is contaminated, by discouraging mothers from breastfeeding.

The Bongo Club, a popular cabaret venue which is run by a charitable trust, said that it would go ahead with its own

Tap Water awards for acts refusing to accept the Perrier.

The boycott call is backed by past Perrier winners Rob Newman and Emma Thompson, as well as comedian Victoria Wood and Oscar-nominated actor Julie Christie.

Tap Water awards organiser Dana Macleod said: "This issue, concerning Nestle's marketing, became strikingly clear to us in February, during a visit to South Africa, where we were setting up an exchange programme with a township arts group."

A Nestle spokesman said that the company abided by the 1981 World Health Organisation International code on breast milk substitutes.





Hey, heard the one about the ethical comedian?

Comedian Stewart Lee says Emma Thompson should grow up: alternative comedians can't afford to boycott the Perrier awards, they need the cash and kudos

It's nine years since Nestlé, the powdered baby milk producer with the controversial record in developing world dealings, bought Perrier's bottled water business, and so became the de facto sponsor of the Perrier awards, the Edinburgh Festival's Oscars of comedy.

But at the start of the festival last week the actress Emma Thompson and anti-capitalist comedian Rob Newman belatedly attempted to put the powdered milk industry in the dock by calling for a boycott of the awards next Saturday on the grounds that, according to the World Health Organisation, it is responsible for the deaths of 1.5m babies a year.

If this all sounds serious, bear in mind that the following article may include the words "breasts" and "breastmilk" which, according to World Comedy Organisation research in the late 1970s, have been proven to make children snirk and thus are officially funny.

The case for boycotting the Perrier awards would once have seemed obvious. Even Britpop slackers Pulp, Cast, Ocean Colour Scene and Shed 7 pulled out of a Nestlé music promotion last year.

So what does the non-committal response of Fringe comics this year say about the comedy industry, birthed, as it was, in the anti-racist,

anti-sexist "alternative" comedy culture of the early 1980s? "It seems that comedians here feel that there's a load of old acts, who are not eligible, complaining about something that will only be to the detriment of those who would be nominated anyway," said Fringe regular Richard Herring, himself a fan of milk in all its forms.

But former Perrier winner Jenny Belair was shocked to learn that Nestlé had owned Perrier in 1995 when she won the main award. As

she said: "I've been going around saying my conscience was clear, but now I realise my hands are actually dripping with gore. That said, I'm not giving it back."

But apart from these two devil-may-care veterans, it was difficult to find anyone with a chance of winning an award who was prepared to offer an opinion.

One comedian, who like most wished to remain anonymous, but may or may not be bald, said that the best strategy for a conscience-

stricken comic was to stay in the race, win, and then smash the statuette into pieces with a brick after receiving it. In this way said comic would avoid the sacrifice of any valuable media coverage and still make a political point.

Just like long-term opposition politicians who suddenly find themselves having to shake hands with American Republicans, it's only in the past decade that once alternative comedy has been popular enough, and attractive enough to the media, to be forced to take moral quibbles seriously.

The young Ben Elton of 20 years ago would surely have been rightly disgusted by his older self, sanctioning the use of a song he co-wrote at George Bush's inauguration. "It wasn't presented as a Republican event but as the inauguration of the head of state of the United States," he equivocated.

But to be fair the young Ben Elton of 20 years ago could have maintained the moral high ground

without putting himself to the test. Then, he would never have been invited to the White House to perform routines about how socks go rotting in the washing machine.

Alternative comedians of the 1980s didn't attend the festering banquet of corrupt modern culture, but it's easy to decline an invitation that you are unlikely to be

offered.

It's also easier for high-profile high earners to wear the gladragas of opposition chic than it is for comics already facing a five-figure loss in Edinburgh to absent themselves from an obnoxious chance of justifying their expense.

When Neil Young sang "Ain't singin' for Pepsi, ain't singin' for Coke" he was already a multi-millionaire for whom fizzy drink funding was not a financial incentive.

Tommy Sheppard, of Edinburgh's Stand Comedy club, was sympathetic to the comedians' dilemma. "It's so costly to get here, you're locked into a Faustian pact with promoters, so it makes sense to keep your trap shut." The dissenting voice hasn't been gagged, just priced out of the market.

Chris Morris, of Brass Eye, the Daily Mail's bête noire, has however, been able to maintain the objectivity that makes him one of British comedy's truly worthwhile satirists. He stands entirely outside

the cultural mainstream that colours the commentary of his more accommodating contemporaries, and receives the financial backing of Channel 4, which loves a good controversy, irrespective of its actual moral worth.

Not for Morris the balancing act of doing highly paid advertisements for banks one week, then appearing in a campaign to drop Third World debt the next, before heading off to Have I Got News For You to call into question the honesty and credibility of other media figures.

Since the year zero of 1979 alternative comedy has grown up. Its subject material is now more varied and fascinating than the pummelling of Tory straw men that was once its stock in trade.

It's been through its rebellious teens and is now settling down into adult life, with all its difficult moral choices. Poor, novice practitioners feel harried by financial necessity while, at the other extreme, famous names are compromised by previously undreamt

Source: Sunday Times
Date: Sunday 12. August 2001
Page: 2

Circulation: ABC 1386499 Weekly
Ad Rates: page rate £54,500.00
sec rate £129.00
Tel: 020 7782 5000

BABY MILK

(D4008-1)

Page 2 of 2

chances to make a mint. Like Nestlé, comedy is now a business, and business has its own morality. Peter Brabeck, Nestlé's chief executive officer, explained the morality of business at a shareholders' meeting in April. Admittedly it was an unofficial statement, and Nestlé's press office were keen to point out that English was not Mr Brabeck's first language, implying he may not have understood what he was saying, but there seems to be something not

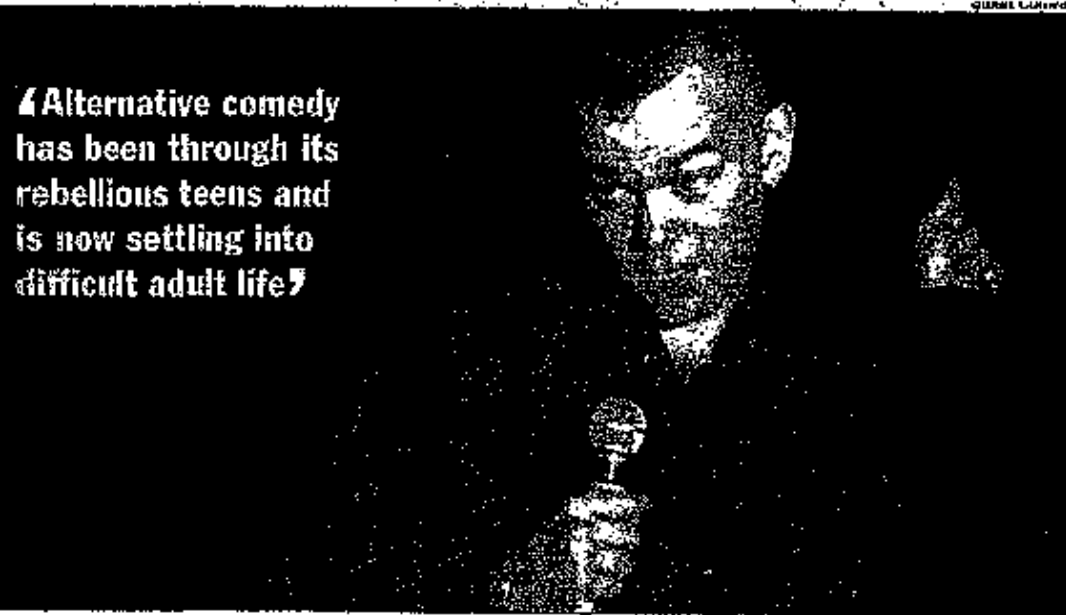
ten at the core of his message. "I decided to eliminate the word 'ethical' from Nestlé," he said, "because it's a word which divides people. We don't talk about ethics at Nestlé. We talk about responsibility. Our responsibility to our shareholders, our employees, and all other stakeholders."

What was once the scruffy world of alternative comedy is now professional enough to attract its own shareholders, employees and stake-

holders. It is asking a lot of the workers in the world of comedy to take a moral position in an era when the man ultimately behind their Perrier prizes apparently sees nothing wrong with eliminating the word ethics from his company's lexicon.

But is it asking too much?

Alternative comedy has been through its rebellious teens and is now settling into difficult adult life



Stewart Lee, half of the comedy duo Lee and Herring, says politics is strictly for the well paid



Nestlé in hot water over Perrier boycott

by Patrick Tocher

PLANS by some of Britain's leading comedians to boycott this month's Perrier awards at the Edinburgh Festival are no laughing matter for Nestlé, owner of the mineral water brand.

Once again the world's biggest food company is under fire over the way it sells powdered baby milk in developing countries. This time, however, Nestlé risks bad publicity and a potential hit to sales and also damage to a valuable brand that has only just recovered from the devastating product contamination scare 10 years ago.

"Management must be careful," says Kevin Thompson, managing director of design agency Brandsmiths. "Perrier is a hugely important brand for Nestlé and must be protected."

The boycott, the latest example of a global company under pressure from campaigners to be more socially responsible — is led by Rob Newman, the former comedy partner of David Baddiel. He is supported by celebrities including Julie Wal-

ters, Victoria Wood and Richard E Grant. They believe that if comedians refuse to compete in the awards, it will increase pressure on the Swiss food group to change its controversial marketing practices.

"Nestlé has to be stopped," says actress Emma Thompson, who won the inaugural Perrier Award as a member of the Cambridge Footlights.

Nestlé has been here before. In the late 1970s it became the target of a grass-roots consumer boycott in 10 countries after being found to employ "milk nurses" — marketing representatives who dressed as doctors to sell Nestlé's baby milk to mothers in Africa as the healthiest alternative for their children.

In arguably the first successful campaign of its kind, the boycott culminated in the 1981 World Health Organisation's International Code of Marketing for Breast Milk Substitutes to regulate the promotion of breast-milk substitutes. According to the WHO, 1.5m babies still die each year because they are not breastfed. Where water

is unsafe, a bottle-fed child is up to 25 times more likely to die as a result of diarrhoea than a breastfed child.

The code bans all promotion of bottle feeding and sets out requirements for labelling and information on infant feeding. But 20 years on, campaigners claim that Nestlé, which dominates the baby-milk market, is still the worst offender for violating the code by encouraging sales of infant formula to moth-

ers who would be better off breastfeeding.

Said Randall, policy director at lobbying group Baby Milk Action and a veteran of the original anti-Nestlé campaign, accepts that the company has made improvements such as removing baby pictures from its infant formulas. But she says that constant vigilance and monitoring is needed to enforce other parts of the 1981 agreement.

"The code is completely opposed to the interests of the baby food industry," she says.

She notes how Nestlé uses the code's requirement to state the superiority of breastfeeding to endorse its own substitutes by adding text which she says effectively claims "this formula is similar to breast milk, so it must be good".

Baby Milk Action has been urging consumers to reject Nestlé products since the 1970s. Although commercially insignificant, the boycott remains widespread among universities and has affected Nestlé's ability to recruit graduates.

But the anti-Perrier campaign opens a new front. It raises the issue of Nestlé's promotion of bottled water in poorer countries where what is needed is good piped water.

And it targets a brand that has only just managed to break even after recording losses every year since the contamination scare hit sales, particularly in the US, in 1990 at the height of its success in restaurants worldwide.

The scare saw 160m bottles of water recalled from 120 countries and destroyed. Perrier's shares fell by up to 40% and the company was taken over two years later by Nestlé.

The latest campaign comes as Perrier, the world's best-selling sparkling-water brand, is about to introduce its first plastic bottle to attract younger customers put off by the traditional glass design.

So far the response from Perrier's parent company to its crit-

ics has been limited to soothing statements about baby-milk policy. Nestlé executives declined to be interviewed, but issued a statement saying there was "a lot of misunderstanding" about how infant-formula products are sold in the developing world. "Our practices changed many years ago to reflect concerns about the use of infant formula," it continued.

Nestlé says it no longer advertises or promotes infant formula to mothers and does not give incentives to health workers for promoting its baby milk. Free supplies to hospitals have also been phased out and the company now gives quantities of formula if requested by governments only "in very special circumstances", such as natural disasters or multiple births when a mother has died.

But Nestlé may need to do more than just explain its marketing policy to avoid lasting commercial damage.

"If I was a Perrier brand manager, I'd be having a strong word with the parent company," Thompson says. "Many Nestlé products are co-branded, it must come out and say what these products stand for in terms of social responsibility. Nike has done this recently, but Nestlé is not doing it at the moment."

Nestlé says it is working closely with Perrier's management and public relations people, but insists the threatened boycott is a local issue that only affects the UK.

"Nestlé is a very decentralised company," a spokeswoman says. "It's not causing huge waves in Switzerland."

Perrier rejects any suggestion that management has blundered by continuing to sponsor the awards. "Perrier created the awards 21 years ago when sales of mineral water were minimal. It is not as if some big corporation has gone in and cornered a cultural event," it says.



SUNDAY BUSINESS

Cosseted farmers

Sir - It would appear that modern-day British farmers have become part of the dependency culture. They receive subsidies to grow certain crops and subsidies to set fields "aside" and not grow crops.

Then, when something such as foot and mouth strikes, they receive compensation from the government. Why aren't farmers covered by insurance to assist in times of misfortune just like people in any other type of business?

Roger A Smith
Chelmsford
Essex

Price of good PR

Sir - Patrick Toher's article "Nestlé in hot water over Perrier boycott" (12 August) highlights the important link between corporate social

responsibility, reputation, public relations and bottom-line performance.

Corporate and brand reputation are critical business assets. If damaged, the impact on sales, performance and share price can be immediate and devastating. Increasingly, reputation is linked to consumer perceptions of responsible corporate behaviour.

Consumers are ever more engaged critics of corporate behaviour and are prepared to vote with their feet. Rebuilding a damaged reputation takes years.

Corporate social responsibility is an issue no business can afford to ignore.

Ian Wright
President
The Institute of Public Relations
London EC1

Letters for publication should include the writer's name, address and telephone number. Send to address above or e-mail: letters@sundaybusiness.co.uk



JENNY EGLAIR

Edinburgh Festival Diary

The big hoo-ha at the festival is the attempted boycotting of the Perrier Awards, a campaign spearheaded by



Emma Thompson (left) and Victoria Wood (below), as a protest against Perrier being owned by Nestlé (who flog powdered milk to Third World



mothers). As a past winner, I've been hauled out to put in my two pennyworth. I was smugly thinking that I'd won it before Nestlé took over Perrier but

apparently that's not the case and now I'm a murdering bitch.





The vagina monologist

EDINBURGH COMEDY Jenny Eclair

helped to put female comics on the map. So why does she still feel the need to be on the Fringe? Alex O'Connell found out...

Jenny Eclair lives with Chris, Dan and Richard. Not the name of some progressive children's book or a new Channel 4 sitcom but her living arrangements during the Edinburgh Fringe. The comedienne, still the only female solo winner of the Perrier Award — stand-up comedy's Holy Grail — is sharing a top-floor flat in New Town with three handsome boy comedians, Chris Addison, Dan Antopolski and Richard Herring.

The guys are playing cards in the hall, Eclair and I have taken over the kitchen. Addison is going to make sausages for lunch. Eclair says she could easily get a meal-for-one from Marks. "No, really," he insists. "There's some organic lamb in the fridge." Do they lead her astray, I wonder? Can anyone lead Jenny Eclair astray? "Oh, God no, they are so good," says the former punk poet. "It's like living with teenagers. They have big feet. There are lots of clean clothes and ironing which is great because I don't need any more bad influence."

As lovely as the boys seem, it is

only natural to ask why Eclair, whose critically-acclaimed novel *Camberwell Beauty* is about to come out in paperback, needs to do another Edinburgh.

She's 41, the mother of 12-year-old Phoebe, and has a reasonably lucrative and enjoyable time writing plays for radio, and a second novel is planned. Wouldn't she rather become a full-time novelist and sit tight in her Camberwell garret in deepest South London? Why live like a student and

My stuff is old hat now, but I'm a 41-year-old mother and it's not my job to be cutting edge

play to beered-up audiences night after night?

"I do Edinburgh because it's an annual kick up the butt," says Eclair, leaning out of the sash window to take her first cigarette of the day. The boys don't smoke. "If you are not concerned about the art form — I am — you can do voiceovers like normal people.

I'm not very literary. I get a lot out of writing but there is no applause in the end, so I miss that."

So much so in fact that Eclair is still willing to come to Edinburgh even though she expects to lose between £4,000 and £8,000 on the Fringe, despite playing to packed rooms. "It's a myth that we're all taking hits," she says, reacquainting the front bleats on her black-and-white denim skirt.

She has delivered yet another well-written and expertly performed show, *Middle Aged Bitch*, at the Pleasance Home 2 until August 27 (except August 21). There are jokes about old age sex, and, in case you were disappointed, jokes about girls' bits. Doesn't her daughter, who Eclair talks about with pride, cringe when she watches her mother?

"We have this pessimistic live affair," says Eclair. "She has a healthy disregard for what I do." She adds: "My stuff is quite old hat now, but I'm a 41-year-old mother and it's not my job to be cutting edge."

Having won the Perrier Award in 1995 with *Proud and Ambitious*, she is not eligible to compete for this year's award. But like most of the comedy community, Eclair has been following the argument sparked by the comedian Rob Newman. He has asked fellow comics to boycott the awards because of the alleged practices involving sales of pow-

dered baby milk in Third World countries by Perrier's parent company, Nestlé.

Eclair is concerned about the effect it will have on this year's Perrier winner. "I thought that I'd won the award before Nestlé took over Perrier," she says, "but I recently discovered I didn't. In which case my hands are dripping in blood too... I think there must be some really annoyed per-

formers up here now. The Perrier has been a career-maker for a lot of people. You work very hard since you're 22, or whatever, and sometimes it is just your year. What if it's your year this year?"

Eclair says that her Edinburghs past have been a mixed bag. "I've had some fabulous times and some miserable ones. The year after the Perrier win I had this terrible whiff of age about me." She goes on to tell a typically Eclairian story about the year her tampon fell out live on stage. "I wasn't wearing pants. It got a great laugh, but you can't rephotograph that," she says, picking out a plum from a plastic carton.

Has she seen other women performers this year? She makes positive noises about Catherine Tate and Jackie Chune (see reviews below). Remarkably, she is reasonably optimistic about the future for women comics. "Female comedy is happening. They are breaking out of the ghetto," she says, then throws out a wicked smile. "Just so long as they're not too pretty."

● Alex O'Connell is a member of this year's Perrier judging panel

arts



Source: The Times
Date: Tuesday 14, August 2001
Page: 13
Circulation: ABC 720383 Daily
Ad Rates: page rate £23,500.00
acc rate £57.00
Tel: 0207 782 5000

Nestle

[D4008-1]

Page 2 of

... and caught a few of the other women left standing up in Edinburgh

IT IS hardly girl power (they're far too old for that). But in the week that saw Jerry Eclair return to the Fringe, it was announced that Jo Brand is to get her own radio show on BBC London Live, formerly GLR, starting at the end of the month. Meanwhile, us comedy-lovin' sisters are meant to be getting over excited (and probably very giggly too) about the fact that there are 40 per cent more female Fringe comic performers up here than last year.

But like an eat-all-you-can-for-a-five lunchtime Chinese, quantity ain't quality. While punters are busy putting beer money on a series of men for the Perrier, few dare speak up for the sparse scattering of decent women.

Enter Jackie Clune and Cath-

erine Tate, my pick of the best women at the Fringe this year. Jackie Clune's *Bitch/a* at the Assembly Rooms is camp comedy cabaret at its best. Tate, who trained with the National Youth Theatre and has been with the RSC this year, has produced a well-constructed sketch show which allows her exceptional acting ability to shine through.

Clune begins by telling a mostly autobiographical tale of her disillusionment with the lesbian "community". She is 35, single and, as she observes, "for the past 13 years I've been a lesbian. From, in the Eighties that fact alone would have got me a standing ovation." But, she continues, this lifestyle does not really interest her anymore. Cue a very funny tale about her first (and gay) boyfriend.

The script is tight and her improvisation sharp as ever. But it's her magnificent singing voice, mostly used for comic effect, which really takes you by surprise. Watch out for her interpretation of Dido's *Thank You*, which gave me one of my biggest single laughs of the Fringe so far.

Tate also sings (*I Am What I Am* in the style of a belligerent grandmother). Her gig (at the Pleasance) is made up of four sketches in which she plays a "gender illusionist", a seemingly dull but eventually surprising woman who works in a personnel department, the bride from hell, and *that* grandma. Her characterisations are fantastic. But I couldn't help thinking that there weren't enough laughs. While enjoyable, the gig was more like a treatment for *Smack*

the Pony-style TV than a top Fringe performance.

Other women performers include Sarah Kendall, an Australian comic who was a sell-out at this year's Melbourne International Comedy Festival. She is collecting praise for *War*, at the Gilded Balloon, in which she fits from Nazi wives to the First World War battlefields. It's true that Kendall is clever and amusing, but her set feels info-heavy and she has a tendency to pre-empt every anecdote with the clunking "while I was doing my research for this show".

Still, there is much fun ahead. Joan Rivers, the bawdy American TV comic, arrives in town on August 24 for just two nights and Pam Ann, the comedy air hostess, flies in on August 20. Better fasten your seatbelts.



Press Release

African health campaigners welcome boycott of Perrier Award at the Edinburgh Fringe

15th August 2001

The coordinator of a network of African health campaigners has welcomed the boycott of the Nestlé Perrier Award at the Edinburgh Festival. Top UK comedy performers and actors are calling for up-and-coming acts to boycott the award in favour of a new corporate-free 'Tap Water Award'. The boycott began spontaneously following a newspaper interview given by Rob Newman last month.

Emma Thompson, Julie Christie and Victoria Wood are amongst those calling for the boycott because Perrier is owned by Nestlé. Nestlé is the world's largest food company and stands accused of contributing to the unnecessary death and suffering of infants because of its marketing of breastmilk substitutes. According to UNICEF reversing the decline in breastfeeding could save the lives of 1.5 million infants around the world every year.

African health campaigners have welcomed the boycott call. Pauline Kisaanga, Coordinator of the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) in Africa, speaking from Swaziland, said:

"Nestlé's Perrier Award is a big publicity for Nestlé and its products and the company uses such public images to establish itself with our governments in the Africa region. News of the Perrier Award boycott has reached us in Africa. I would encourage all our allies to take part in the boycott. The Nestlé boycott is very important for raising awareness among our health workers and women in Africa and putting pressure on Nestlé."

The 20-country Nestlé Boycott is supported in the UK by over 100 church, health and consumer groups, over 90 businesses, 78 student unions, 17 local authorities, 12 trade unions, 74 politicians and political parties and many celebrities.

Oscar winner, Emma Thompson said: *"The Perrier Awards should be boycotted by all right-thinking people, because Nestlé has got to be stopped."*

Julie Christie said:

"I've been supporting the Nestle Boycott for years due to the company's irresponsible marketing of baby food. This has brought about children being deprived of the early natural immunization that breast milk provides. The use of contaminated water is another issue in rural areas and, a final twist is that by using Nestle milk the baby becomes hooked onto something which costs money. Nestle owns many companies and Perrier, unbeknownst to most people, is one of them. I hope that up and coming comedians will think about these issues and consider joining the Nestle Boycott by declining to support the Perrier Awards and would-be participants could instead enter for the Tap water awards which will hurt no-one in the process of making them laugh."

Victoria Wood said: *"Comedians can manage without the Perrier Award and the world should be able to manage without Perrier. I support the Boycott."*

Victoria Wood also raised concerns about the environmental impact of bottling water:

"The idea that the only way to get clean drinking water is to pay for some in a bottle is appalling. No one has the right to corner the world's drinking supply, that's like something from science fiction. I very happily drink tap water most of the time. I'm not comfortable about the waste involved in producing a plastic bottle just so I can drink something I can get from a tap."

When Nestlé launched its 'Pure Life' brand of bottled water in Pakistan its aggressive promotion campaign was criticised for undermining efforts to provide piped drinking water for all (see Update 25).

An alternative 'Tap Water' award has been launched by the Bongo Club in Edinburgh which will host over 100 music and comedy acts, all of which have agreed to boycott Perrier. If financial backing for the Tap Water Award is achieved The Bongo Club intends to set up a fund, which will enable cash-strapped artists to bring shows to the Fringe. Bongo Club coordinator Suzanne Merrell said:

"I'm hoping that we can establish the Tap Water Awards as an alternative, and encourage people to use comedy to raise awareness. We are hoping to take it further and make it an award for all the other comedy festivals around the world. If we can make it global, we can see that really having an effect on Perrier and Nestlé."

Patti Rundall, Policy Director of Baby Milk Action said:

"The boycott of the Perrier Awards started spontaneously - with no huge PR budget behind it. But in just these last few days its shown how much can be done with just the simple truth. Before now, many people were unaware that Nestlé bought Perrier in 1992 and that it is one of its range of 12,000 products embroiled in disturbing global politics. The Tap Water awards will provide free thinking comedians with an opportunity to say whatever needs to be said - without fear of upsetting sponsors."

A website dedicated to helping people in the United States prevent damage to their communities water supplies by multinational water bottling companies is also calling for a boycott of Nestlé and Perrier (Ref. 1). Following an independent study, the World Wildlife Fund is now urging people to drink tap water for the benefit of the environment and their wallets. WWF found that bottled water can be 1000 times more expensive than tap water, yet there are more standards regulating tap water in Europe and the US than those applied to the bottled water industry. According to WWF every year 1.5 million tons of plastic are used to bottle water (Ref. 2).

Nestlé employs a team of staff to counter the international Nestlé boycott, which has been launched by groups in 20 countries (most recently in Cameroon by a national NGO which found Nestlé promoting breastmilk substitutes at health facilities with film shows - see report in Boycott News 29).

In many news reports Nestlé falsely claims that its critics refer to marketing practices it has now stopped. In reality the evidence demonstrates Nestlé malpractice continues in a systemic and institutionalised manner. An international monitoring report launched at the World Health Assembly in May 2001 shows Nestlé to be responsible for more violations of the marketing standards adopted by the Assembly than any other company (see the IBFAN report Breaking the Rules 2001).

In July Nestlé, along with other manufacturers of breastmilk substitutes violating the Code, was excluded from the EISE4Good ethical investment index because of its continued violation of the marketing requirements for breastmilk substitutes.

Nestlé rejected a Baby Milk Action four-point plan for saving infant lives and ultimately ending the boycott in March 2001 (see Boycott News 29).

Ref. 1: The Nestlé Corporation is Abusing our Country's Most Important Natural Resource By Terri Wolfe, President, Save Our Springs, Inc. www.saveamericaswater.com. Also see <http://www.motherjones.com/news/water/water.html>

Ref. 2: The real cost of bottled water, World Wildlife Fund Press release, 2 May 2001.

For more information contact Baby Milk Action, 23 St Andrews Street, Cambridge, CB2 3AX, Tel: +44 1223 464420, Fax: +44 1223 464417.

For information on the Tap Water Award contact Suzanne Merrell - 0131 556 5204.

Some reports on the web:

The Scotsman - 24 July 2001: Comic battles to gag milk powder sponsor

BBC - 24 July 2001: Comedian calls for prize boycott

The Independent - 24 July 2001: Comedian calls for a boycott on Perrier Awards and 'corporate power'

BBC - 31 July 2001: Actress joins call for Perrier boycott

Yahoo - 6 August 2001: Campaigners call for Perrier Award boycott

The Telegraph - 6 August 2001: Stars boycott Fringe awards for comedy

Notes for editors:

1. For news of other celebrity endorsers see Boycott News 29.
2. Baby Milk Action is a non-profit organisation which aims to save infant lives and to end the avoidable suffering caused by inappropriate infant feeding. Baby Milk Action works within the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) - a coalition of more than 150 citizen and health worker groups in more than 90 countries around the world. IBFAN works for better child health and nutrition through the promotion of breastfeeding and the elimination of irresponsible marketing of infants foods, bottles and teats. Some news reports incorrectly suggest that Baby Milk Action is campaigning for a ban on infant formula marketing. In reality, Baby Milk Action is campaigning for companies to market their baby foods in accordance with the requirements adopted by the World Health Assembly.
3. The WHO International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes was adopted by the World Health Assembly in 1981. Subsequent Resolutions have clarified interpretation and addressed changes in marketing practices and scientific knowledge.
4. The latest IBFAN report - Breaking the Rules 2001 - was launched in May this year at the World Health Assembly to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes. The report cites Code violations by artificial baby milk companies, including promotion via the Internet. (The report can be purchased from Baby Milk Action's Virtual Shop).
5. Nestlé's assurances about its marketing practices do not stand up to scrutiny. In May 1999 the UK Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) upheld all of Baby Milk Action's complaints about an anti-boycott advertisement in which Nestlé claimed to market infant formula 'ethically and responsibly'. The two-year investigation was one of the longest in the ASA's history (see report in Boycott News 25).
6. In November 2000 Nestlé was the first company called to give evidence to the European Parliament Public Hearings on corporate responsibility. Nestlé refused to attend (see report in Boycott News 29).
7. Baby Milk Action has produced an education pack called Seeing through the Spin, which is designed for teachers and educators to help students recognise and deconstruct public relations messages.

Baby Milk Action is a member of the International Baby Food Action Network

◀ [press release index](#)

▲
[top](#)



THESCOTSMAN.CO.UK

Signs of a stunning level of ignorance over Perrier award boycott

KATE Moss, according to some reports, is "desperate" for a baby and planning fertility treatment in the next six months if she doesn't conceive. The marvellously cheekboned one is not alone in her desire to fit babies in with Prada's new season if the average reader believes everything on this topic. Alongside tales of models in laa-laa land, come predictable childbirth scare stories. Now, caesareans may be "banned".

Columns are filled with lame old references to "celebrity-style delivery" and "too posh to push Mums". What utter nonsense. Any woman who has really received a caesarean against medical advice just because Madonna got one needs more things examined than her groaning uterus. Her doctor for one thing.

Women don't "demand" from obstetricians. The women who do get the delivery they want, for whatever reasons they want it, don't have louder voices, or smaller brains, or more magazines cluttering up their defunct birthing pools. They have more money. The dreamt-up demands that women are supposedly making in antenatal units across the country are as close to reality as ordinary women are ever getting to make the same choices as celebrities in the first place.

However, this image of motherhood as a time of immediate gratification is one which has deeper, more important implications than a few hastily written columns. Obviously mothers in other countries aren't quite as important as the ones we have here, but it is still stunning to see the level of ignorance which has surrounded the Perrier Award boycott by some fringe performers. Journalists have rushed to the barricades to defend practices which have been called into question by many international organisations, including the United Nations, as well as failing to interact in any way with the underlying reasons behind why so many mothers choose not to breastfeed, preferring to dismiss the boycott as "liberal" or "politically correct". Funny enough, that's how I like my attacks on exploitation.

Mike Brady, of Baby Milk Action, has rightly questioned many of the tactics of powdered-milk manufacturers. "They label their products as 'now closer to breast milk'. That's like saying London is closer to the South Pole than Birmingham - they are both still a long way away."

I have lost count of the number of women who have said to me that they have absolutely no concerns about feeding their babies in this way because they have a blind belief that these products simply would not be allowed to be promoted in such a way if there was any doubt over their benefits. They must be extremely reassured by this week's recall of SMA. It is still the case that many new mothers actually believe milk substitutes to be better than breast milk. The messages are not getting through about the protective wonders of the latter which are afforded to both mother and child, in both the short- and long-term. And is it any wonder? Breasts don't make profits when they feed babies.

The announcement that many performers intended to boycott the Perrier awards has been supported by Suzanne Merrill, who plans to run a corporate-free "Tap Water Award" at Edinburgh's Bongo Club next Thursday. There has been international support from representatives of groups who see the impact of the marketing tactics of some multinationals on women in areas of deprivation. UNICEF has claimed that reversing the decline in breastfeeding would save the lives of 1.5 million infants a year.

I've had my run-ins with Nestlé in the past, so I shall tread very carefully here, but I would very much like to see the evidence and research which far too many journalists appear to have been subjected to which shows that powdered breast milk substitutes are a jolly good idea for Third World women and their babies. In one case, I read that these products actually helped women feed their babies and supported a nurturing relationship.

At which point does that happen? When there is only contaminated water to mix the powder with? When the free samples run out and the mother's milk has dried up? When the feeds get diluted because there is no money to buy more? Or maybe when the child is dehydrated or suffering from chronic diarrhoea, but the Mum can at least look at the shiny new folder and pen she has been given by the manufacturers? Isn't motherhood grand?

LINDA WATSON-BROWN
Friday, 17th August 2001
The Scotsman

[top](#) | [back](#)

Comedian hits out at 'hijacker' Perrier

Awards' sponsor is accused of cashing in on funnymen

COMIC Mark Thomas launched an attack on the company which sponsors the Fringe comedy prize today, saying that it is "hijacking" comedians' talents.

The stand-up comedian and TV presenter - himself a former nominee for the Perrier award - is appearing in two benefit shows in Edinburgh this week and called for comics to get someone else to sponsor the prize, the most prestigious award in comedy. And he predicted that the furore over sponsor Nestlé, which has been accused of breaching baby milk regulations in developing countries, would become an annual event.

Comedian Rob Newman started the... near Nisfield, Der.



ATTACK: Mark Thomas

Perrier's parent company which hit back by saying its critics were using the awards to publicise a political campaign.

Mark Thomas, who was nominated for the prize in 1991, a year before Nestlé bought Perrier, has now joined the fray. He said: "It's the other way around - Der."

rier has hijacked comedians' talents and are riding on their backs. They get extreme amounts of publicity and coverage out of it.

"Comedians can be very critical of themselves and self-aware, but can't always recognise their full value. It would be great if comedians took that step and said, actually, we're being used to endorse a brand where the parent company has got huge question marks over its ethical behaviour and we're not going to play."

Mr Thomas accused the multinational, which bought Perrier in 1992, of failing to properly label their baby milk products in appropriate languages abroad.

He said: "The company say that they completely abide by the World Health Organisation code, but without doing a very extensive trawl, we found mistakes in line out of ten countries."

"It was only when I actually got hold of this chief executive of

Nestlé that we actually got some changes achieved. They're saying there's nothing wrong now, but when they have said that in the past it has turned out otherwise and they have then admitted it."

He added: "Now that comics are aware of it, it will certainly be raised again and I would hope that next year comics will be in a position to plan an alternative. If getting an award is that important, then let's try to find some other people to sponsor it."

Alternative

Mr Thomas' boycott call came as speculation mounted over this year's nominees. Among those tipped to be in the running for either the main or Best Newcomer prizes are Danny Bhooy, Ross Noble, Daniel Kitson, Mike Wilton, The Legendary Polowski Diamond Heist, Adam Bloom, Rich Fulcher, Noble and Silver and the Unhitched Brothers. So far

none of the eligible comedians has ruled themselves out of consideration, but those shortlisted will be under pressure to declare their position.

Among those who have lent their support to the campaign, run by the Baby Milk Action group, are former nominee Johnny Vegas, past winner Emma Thompson and Victoria Wood.

A spokesman for the Perrier Comedy Prize said: "We can't speak on behalf of Nestlé, but as far as we are concerned the awards have not been affected by this campaign and are going ahead as normal."

The judging panel met yesterday and nominations for this year's prizes will be revealed on Wednesday. The winners will be declared on Saturday.

The alternative Tap Water Awards, organised by the Bongo Club in response to the campaign, are set to be held on Thursday.



Comedian Thomas joins call for Perrier boycott

Mike Wade

THE comedian Mark Thomas has joined calls for a boycott of the Perrier Award, the most prestigious prize for comedians at the Edinburgh Fringe.

Earlier this month, other well-known entertainers, including Rob Newman and Emma Thompson, backed the campaign led by Baby Milk Action.

They accuse Nestlé, the owner of the Perrier brand, of irresponsibly promoting powdered baby milk in the third world.

The company retorted that its critics were using the Fringe awards to promote a political

campaign. But Thomas turned that allegation on its head.

He said: "It's the other way around - Perrier has hijacked comedians' talents and is riding on their backs. They get extreme amounts of publicity and coverage out of it."

But Thomas acknowledged the call for a boycott was unlikely to prove effective this year. He added: "I understand comics have worked hard to put themselves in the frame and done a lot of good work."

"But I also recognise the real importance of this issue. This time comedians probably won't support the boycott, but at least the call has put them in the

right frame of mind for next year. Hopefully something else can be organised then."

An inveterate campaigner, Thomas plays today at the Gilded Balloon in a benefit for War on Want, which, in turn, is seeking a judicial review over British arms sales to Morocco.

Thomas accused the government of shedding the last vestiges of its "ethical" foreign policy, which had been trumpeted after the 1997 election. He argued that, as a result of arms sales, people in the western Sahara, who have campaigned for independence since 1975, would die at the hands of the Moroccan army.



BOYLING POINT

By Frank Boyle



email: info@boycartoon.co.uk website: www.boycartoon.co.uk

Room sell-off plan makes no sense say Liberal Democrats

Ex-min blasts over 1

A FORMER gov today accused t

Ex-sports minis that the Governm

community that paramilitary pri admission of Sinn Ireland's exercisi on the decommis she said.

Gang:

The Governu standards" on No to it reiterating an terrorists when it sportsmen to o' Duablane, said Me

London's Janitac She compares Londour's Janitac fig: "We claim t crime, but demorr Would we treasm Metropolitan Polic the Yardies?"

And she said th opposed "ethnic "racial hatred" in d allowed republica them in Ulster.

City gea for volun

SCOTLAND'S first volunteers conferen



Source: The Guardian
Date: Wednesday 22. August 2001
Page: 13
Circulation: ABC 395674 Daily
Ad Rates: page rate £16,275.00
sec rate £36.00
Tel: 020 7278 2332

Nestle

(D4008-1)

Gagging order

Brian Logan unveils his alternative Perrier shortlist

It's that time of the year again, when comedians acquire haunted expressions and TV producers start licking their lips. Today, the Perrier shortlist is announced, and Edinburgh festival's stand-ups all have their eyes on the prize. This was the year when their naked ambition was exposed. Despite Rob Newman's high-profile appeal for them to condemn Perrier's parent company Nestlé for its promotion of powdered baby milk in Africa, not a single stand-up agreed to boycott the awards. Whither, now, the comedian's traditional role as gadfly, provocateur and subversive?

Those looking for adventure this year looked beyond the comedy circuit. The industry is addled by hype and terrified that artistic transgression will turn off TV scouts. The Perrier race is the most open in years, which is another way of saying that there have been no stand-out stand-ups. Among the hot tips - Danny Bhoy, Andrew Clover, Dan Antopolski - are some of Edinburgh's least radical acts. A list that rewarded innovation or, better still, indifference to mainstream success might read as follows:

Bob Doolally

"To be truly universal," said Joan Miro, "you must be truly local." To which Doolally might add: "Awa' and shite." Surrounded by comedians trying to appeal to everyone, Doolally doesn't bother. He's an exclusive dish, a niche product. If you don't like football, particularly Scottish football, don't bother coming. If you do, you'll be regaled with frequently libellous, improvised sporting anecdotes by a Denis Law-like pundit with a drink problem. Like many acts at the Stand Comedy Club, which showcases homegrown talent, this character has zero break-out potential. But the locals love him.

The Treason Show

The comedy industry assumes that no one is interested in a world beyond sex, celebrities and beer. Topical and political don't play well - why alarm punters with anything as abrasive as an opinion? In a year marked by an increase in sketch shows, this badly named affair was perhaps the best. It exploits the naifness of all formats - the song/sketch revue - to assault its audience with blistering perspectives on the Middle East peace process, Westminster affairs and the Bulger brouhaha. The show may not push the envelope, but it sizzles, seals and delivers it stuffed with urgent, incisive gags.

Noble and Silver

Despite a welter of duff reviews, the Perrier panel stuck its neck out last year and garlanded these two former

art students, Kim and Stuart, with the best newcomers gong. Will they secure the big prize this year? Probably not. Their show is an intricate collage of video, recorded sound and live action that aims to destabilise and provoke as well as entertain. It complicates the relationship between the audience, the performers and the show. It's more substantial than other comedy offerings, and leaves much that calls itself art looking pretty thin too. "But it's not very funny," say those in the know.



Earl Stevens

The last two Perriers have been won by character comedians: Otis Lee Crenshaw and Al Murray, the Pub Landlord. And the pattern could continue - last year's nominee, Essex horror writer Garth Marenghi, is again being talked up. But there's no character comic more brilliantly conceived than Paul Putner's washed-up American entertainer Stevens, who takes audiences on a journey through cocaine abuse and the "United States of mirth". What's bracing about Stevens is that he excavates the facile heart of the stand-up's job: the banal bonhomie, the dumb sitcoms (*My Rabbi Is a Robot*, indeed) and, of course, the yearning to be loved.

Julian Fox

The wild-card entry. Fox is the antithesis of the stand-up comedian. No blokeish swagger, no beer, no knob gags, no put-downs, no "Isn't it funny when...?" camaraderie. If it weren't for a quirk of fringe classification, his show *Rebranding Mr God* might not be even considered comedy. But there's no other performer in Edinburgh who has dared to stage a show so content to be itself. This nocturnal cabaret from the stage-door keeper of London's Barbican arts centre is a brief, fragmentary trip through the imagination of a bystander at the world's celebrity circus. Could a nowhere man win the Perrier? No chance.

Best newcomer: Daniel Kitson

It's a measure of how the comedy industry works that a promising arrival should be subject to the hype that currently surrounds this Barnsley boy. Geeky, stuttering, and with an overgrown beard, 24-year-old Kitson is marked out as a star of the future by his outsider perspective and disarming wit, if not his pedestrian material. He deserves the best newcomer prize, but the competition is so poor that he may be in the running for the Perrier itself.

FRINGE PRESS RELEASE

out of the blue presents the launch of the **TAP WATER AWARDS**

Don't bottle it - Tap into the Talent @ the Bongo Club on Thursday 23rd August

10 pm - 5am (10.30pm start) £7 / £5

It's finally official, The Bongo Club's penultimate Cabaret evening will host the controversial (and unexpectedly) much hyped Tap Water Awards night, a comical, tongue in cheek, performance platform in support of the boycott of The Perrier Comedy Awards. The evening will comprise more than just a few laughs. Learn with Mother, and suckle on the semi-condensed ambrosia of Bongo Bohemia.

Nestlé's unethical marketing of breast milk substitutes undermines breastfeeding and contributes to the malnutrition and deaths of infants. UNICEF & WHO estimate that one and a half million babies die every year because they're not breastfed.

It is not just in the Fringe that Perrier is being boycotted. Nestlé's bottled water tactics have raised concerns due to their environmental impact. Perrier are the main target of the Save America's Water, campaign.

It is widely believed that, in areas where urgent action is needed to improve the municipal water infrastructure, Nestlé is aiming to create and control the market for bottled water. As the world's biggest food company, they have considerable influences on governments in developing lucrative new markets. Perrier capitalise on people's poverty.

With regard to water, whilst Perrier and San Pellegrino are marketed to the designer label market, Nestlé's Pure Life, is marketed to people in areas where people living in poverty, particularly children, die from drinking contaminated water. It is marketed as enhancing the health and well being of your family. Peter Gliel, director of Pacific Institute, an independent think tank in California, states "Nestlé steps in and fills a need, but turns water into a luxury.

Last month Nestlé's continued violation of The World Health Organisation Code of marketing resulted in their exclusion from the FTSE 4 Good Ethical Investment Index.

For more details on Nestlé's violations of marketing practices and the resulting consequences please read the information attached.

Baby Milk Action's campaign running since 1980 has the support of many high profile personalities. The growing list includes comedian Rob Newman, former Perrier winner actress Emma Thompson (before Perrier was a Nestlé product), actresses Julie Christie, Jane Asher, Julie Walters and Victoria Wood, Zoe Wanamaker, actor Richard E Grant, writer Germaine Greer, cartoonist Gerald Scarf, former MP Tony Benn, philosopher Naom Chomski, MEP Glenyss Kinnock, Green Party MSP Robin Harper as well as musicians Pulp, Dodgy, Cast, Ocean Colour Scene, Shed 7 and Ian Brown.

Mark Thomas a former Perrier nominee and investigator extraordinaire, has been a great inspiration for comedians and supporters alike "Perrier has hi-jacked comedians talents and are riding on their backs. They get extreme amounts of publicity and coverage out of it. Comedians can be very critical of themselves and self aware, but can't always recognise their full value. It would be great if comedians took that step and said, actually, we're being used to endorse a brand where the parent company has got huge question marks over its ethical behaviour and we're not going to play"(August 20th 2001).

Mark Wilson - One of last year's Perrier Judges and Deputy Arts Editor of The Independent. Mark will be lending his expertise to the tap water awards

Chad McCall - British Art Show artist, will be illustrating displays for the event.

In true Bongo style expect the unexpected, this will be an awards night with a difference, (not exclusively comedy based). Although the issues at stake are serious, the event will be informal and above all fun. Have we achieved our aim? Well, did you know that Perrier was owned by Nestlé?

Though launched this year, the shape of The Tap Water Awards will take a more definitive format ready for The Fringe of 2002, commemorating 10 years of Nestlé's takeover of Perrier.

out of the blue are an Arts & Education Trust est. 1994

Bongo Club Contact:

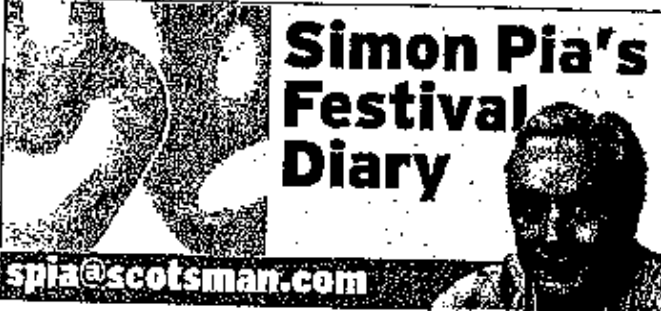
For further information contact Suzy Merrall / Dana Macleod at out of the blue / The Bongo Club, 6-14 New Street, Edinburgh EH8 8DW. 0131 556 5204 / 558 9408 or email suzy@outoftheblue.org.uk

Baby Milk Action Contact:

Jon Dorsett 07949 180 050/ Patti Rundall 07990 501 337
www.babymilkaction.org, info@babymilkaction.org
Baby Milk Action will be present at The Tap Water Awards launch

THE SCOTSMAN

Wednesday, 22 August, 2001



**Simon Pia's
Festival
Diary**

spia@scotsman.com

Mark his words

We almost insulted Mark Thomas and called him an alternative comedian. The Festival blurb - "He's like John Pilger with laughs" - for once flitted the bill. Funnier live than on television, we reckon even Iain Duncan Smith and Ken Clarke would have had chortle especially at his saga of Balfour Beatty and their chairman Lord Weir. Along with new Labour backing they intend to build a dam in the Kurdish part of Turkey. A passionate campaigner on behalf of the Kurds, Thomas received a standing ovation and this was before lunch.

Let's also bang the drum for the Bongo Club whose Tap Water awards, an alternative to the Perrier, are on Thursday from 10pm to 5am. Be home just in time for breakfast.



Stand-ups take a back seat on the Perrier list

JUST ONE stand-up comedian was shortlisted for the Perrier, Britain's most prestigious comedy award, yesterday, amid bitter divisions over the quality of humour at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

The sole stand-up, 24-year-old Daniel Kitson, is regarded as a frontrunner for the £5,000 prize - to be awarded on Saturday night - alongside a surreal theatrical act, Garth Marengi. The rest of the shortlist is made up by the former Perrier nominee Dan Antopolski, Jason Byrne and the Australian fringe veteran Adam Hills.

With a comic's wariness of official commendation, Kitson was diffident as he welcomed his nomination. "It's lovely but if I didn't prick holes in it I wouldn't think I was doing my job as a comedian. As comedians, I think we all have problems with people in self-appointed positions of knowledge and power."

The shortlist features some of the youngest and least well-known comedy acts to have been nominated for some time, in contrast to last year when the eventual winner, Rich Hall, was a well-established name.

But it provided few surprises, bar the disappointment of no nomination for Cydardelic, an anti-globalism, anti-capitalist group (which might have been an intriguing presence at the sponsors' winners' party) and Boom Chicago's show *Pick-ups and Hiccups*. The appar-

BY LOUISE JURY
Media Correspondent

ent dearth of new talent precipitated some strong debate. Promoters blamed the press for failing to dig out the best of the new talent - but critics will insist the festival has been widely regarded as short on startling new arrivals.

The award itself continues to be overshadowed by a threatened boycott, backed by the actress Emma Thompson, a former Perrier winner, and the comic Mark Thomas, over the sale of baby milk substitute in the developing world by Perrier's parent company, Nestlé. An alternative to the Perrier award, the Tap Water, featuring about 15 acts, will take place at the Bongo Club in Edinburgh tonight to raise awareness of the Nestlé-Perrier connection.

Announcing the Perrier shortlist yesterday, Nica Burns, its director, said she believed the overall standard had been very high this year among the 185 shows seen by the judging panel. "If good is seeing people laughing all the way through then there are lots of shows that have been good," she said.

"The shortlisted acts are all quite different in style, but they all have an awful lot of laughs a minute. There is quite a lot of joy this year, which is unusual. Daniel Kitson and Adam Hills are very upbeat and Jason Byrne is very, very happy. There isn't a huge amount of cynicism and sarcasm."



Daniel Kitson

Avoids stand-up's observational clichés by concentrating on life. Technically brilliant, Kitson, 24, a stutterer, is an old pleaser yet few comics think as fast on their feet. Odds

Ticket sales for the festival were higher than last year, with the festival expected to pass the one million mark this weekend and comedy promoters reporting sales significantly ahead of target, she said.

But with critics reporting a lack of new stars of the ilk of Garth Marengi, an instant hit on their debut last year, promoters blamed the reviewers for failing to review newcomers.

Andrew Collier, of Fat Blake

P
sl
ti
yy
te
m
T



Source: Herald (Glasgow)
 Date: Thursday 23. August 2001
 Page: 6
 Circulation: ABC 100603 Daily
 Ad Rates: page rate £11,500.00
 sec rate £26.50
 Tel: 0141 302 7000

Nestlé

(D4008-1)

Perrier five bid to be famous

JUDGES for the Edinburgh Fringe's top comedy award yesterday unveiled an all-male shortlist.

Five names have been put forward for the Perrier Comedy Award, the winner of which will be announced on Saturday night.

The nominees are Dan Antopolski for his show Antopolski 2000, Jason Byrne, Adam Hills (Go You Big Red Fire Engine), Daniel Kitson (Love, Innocence and the Word Cock) and Garth Marenghi (Netherhead). Marenghi was on

the shortlist last year but lost out to Rich Hall, an American comic.

More than 160 shows were eligible this year for the award, which is celebrating its twenty-first anniversary.

Previous winners, including Steve Coogan, Frank Skinner and the League of Gentlemen, have used it as a springboard for their showbiz careers.

This year it came under attack from former winners Rob Newman and Emma Thompson, who called for a boycott because of the involvement of Perrier's

owners, Nestlé, in marketing powdered baby milk in developing countries.

Nica Burns, director and producer of the Perrier Awards, accused the pair of being "out of touch".

Announcing today's shortlist, she said it had been an extraordinary year for comedy with sell-out shows. "I am delighted with the high standard across many shows and agree with the audiences who have voted with their feet: 2001 has been an excellent year."



A baby dies every 30 seconds from unsafe bottle feeding

- Nestlé, the parent company of Perrier, promotes artificial infant feeding around the world, breaking a World Health Organisation (WHO) code of marketing.
- WHO and UNICEF say that reversing the decline in breastfeeding could save 1.5 million lives every year. 4,000 infants die every day because they are not breastfed.
- Where supplies of water are unsafe, a bottle-fed baby is up to 25 times more likely to die as a result of diarrhoea than a breastfed child.
- Expensive baby foods can also increase family poverty. Poverty is a major cause of malnutrition.
- Poor people often over-dilute the baby milk powder to make it last longer. The baby may then become malnourished.
- Breastfeeding saves lives. Even undernourished mothers can breastfeed.
- Nestlé's marketing encourages mothers and health workers to favour artificial infant feeding
- Nestlé makes a profit while others count the cost.

Don't let them get away with it - Boycott Nestlé.

Comedians at this years Edinburgh Festival are being asked to boycott the Perrier Awards and instead enter the corporate free alternative **The Tap Water Awards** being organised by Out of the Blue at the Bongo Club.

BABY MILK ACTION



For more information contact Baby Milk Action
23, St. Andrews Street, Cambridge, CB2 3AX
Tel: 01223 464420 Fax: 01223 464417

email: info@babymilkaction.org

www.babymilkaction.org



COMEDIANS are being asked to

consider **BOYCOTTING** the Perrier

Comedy Awards due to

NESTLÉ'S (Perrier's parent company)

irresponsible marketing of

BREASTMILK SUBSTITUTES.

2,000 leaflets distributed Edinburgh Aug 23-26

NEWS LATEST

Women miss out as judges pick five for the Perrier

DAVID BELCHER

JUDGES for the Edinburgh Fringe's most prestigious comedy award yesterday unveiled an all-male short-list.

Five names have been put forward for the Perrier award, the winner of which will be announced on Saturday night.

The nominees are Dan Antopolski for his show *Antopolski 2000*, Jason Byrne, Adam Hills (*Go You Big Red Fire Engine*), Daniel Kitson (*Love, Innocence, and the Word Cock*) and Garth Marengi (*Netherhead*).

Marengi will be hoping to go a step further than last year, when the act was on the short-list for the award, but lost out to American comic Rich Hall.

More than 160 shows were eligible this year for the Perrier award, which is celebrating its 21st anniversary.

This year, it came under attack from former winners Rob Newman and Emma Thompson, who called for a boycott of the award because of the involvement of Perrier's owners, Nestle, in marketing powdered baby milk in developing countries.

Nica Burns, director and producer of the Perrier Awards, rebutted the criticism and accused the pair of being "out of touch".

Announcing the short-list, she said: "It has been an extraordinary year for comedy. The more well-known names have sold out and the major comedy producers all report higher ticket sales than last year." There was clearly a fatal flaw in Thompson's politically correct effort to make this year's crop of stand-up comedians stand up and be counted in the fight against corporate exploitation of the developing world.

The first Perrier Award recipient wanted her successors to forget about advancing their careers via the £5000 prize and boycott this year's event.

None of the eligible acts heeded Thompson's call, however, it being difficult for any comic to consider pulling out of an event which none of them officially enters anyway. So the Perrier judging panel - comprised of comedy professionals and enthusiastic punters - went about their business of visiting every venue that would let them in. Only one venue, The Bongo Club, barred their path.

That all five short-listed acts are appearing at the Pleasance underlines one unhappy feature this year: competent Fringe comics can be found in abundance, but there are not a huge number of radically original ones.

None of this year's Perrier quintet conforms to the Fringe stand-up stereotype of the cynical metropolitan gagster with a microphone.

Surrealist Dan Antopolski is a cuddly, rumped-looking, bearded cross between former Perrier favourites Dylan Moran and Alan Davies. He is managed by Avalon, the London comedy promoter which has latterly come to dominate the Perrier via such recent victors as Al Murray, Jenny Eclair, and Frank Skinner.

Avalon also handles the satirical career of Garth Marengi, last year's Perrier newcomer title-winner. Ostensibly a writer of bad genre horror fiction, the Marengi stage-name actually masks the identities of three talented-albeit-deliberately-reclusive young actors.

Geeky-looking Yorkshireman Daniel Kitson completes English representation on the list. Kitson specialises in personal anecdotes which charm and disarm, as well as amuse.

Australian Adam Hills and Ireland's Jason Byrne complete the nominations, the latter being long overdue recognition for his energetic brand of freewheeling semi-improvisation.

Hills, meanwhile, provides a subtle variety of comic rumination which depends upon his kindly involving his audience in gentle acts of participation.

-Aug 23rd

[home](#)



Press Release

Perrier 2000 judge supports the corporate-free Tap Water Award at the Edinburgh Fringe

25th August 2001 - photo opportunity

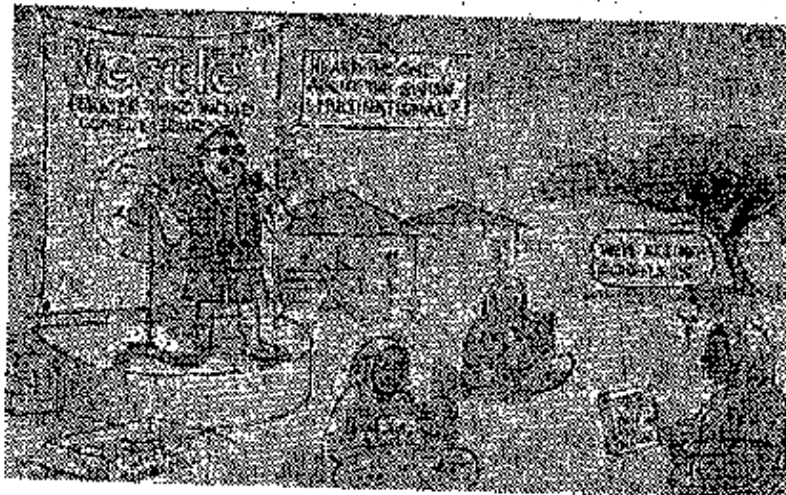
The Perrier Comedy Award boycott comes to a head this weekend as the Edinburgh Festival draws to an end. Various activities have been arranged to raise awareness of Nestle's (Perrier's parent company) marketing malpractice of breastmilk substitutes.



Tally Ho proudly show off their prize as entrants to the corporate-free Tap Water Awards.

The corporate-free alternative to the Perrier Comedy Awards, the Tap Water Awards, were organised by Out of the Blue and held at the Bongo Club on Thursday 23th August from 10.30pm. Because these Awards began quite spontaneously for this, the first year, it was not possible to organise a proper judging panel to review all the acts. Over one hundred acts entered. All entrants joining the Perrier Boycott were given a plug (and a chain).

The format of the awards in future will be decided in the coming year. Emma Thompson has offered to present the prizes next time.



(Cartoon: Frank Boyd - first appeared in the Edinburgh Evening News 23/08/01. Copyright exists on this cartoon - please contact us if you would like to reproduce it.)

[Click here for larger version](#)

Sign our boycott placards
Visit Baby Milk Action's
online Virtual shop

Mark Wilson (Deputy Arts Editor - *The Independent*) who was on the panel for the Perrier Awards in 2000.

Mark Wilson said:

"I believe that the Tap Water Awards provide a vibrant alternative to the more commercial aims of the Perrier Prize. They are nurturing comedy talent for the future in a less competitive format, as well as drawing attention to important issues of globalisation and consumer choice."

The Perrier Awards are announced on Saturday 25th at midnight at Potter Row. On Sunday 26th and Monday 27th The Perrier Pick of the Fringe shows take place at the Assembly rooms. It is expected that boycott supporters will make a light-hearted appearance at these events providing a photo opportunity.

UNICEF estimate that reversing the decline in breastfeeding could save 1.5 million lives every year. Where water is unsafe an artificially fed child is up to 25 times more likely to die from diarrhoea than a breastfed child. The aggressive promotion of breastmilk substitutes by companies such as Nestle is contributing to this unnecessary death and suffering. It was for this reason that the comedian Rob Newman first called on other comedians at this years Edinburgh Festival to boycott the Perrier Awards. Various other comedians and celebrities have also added their voices to the calls to boycott the Awards including Emma Thompson, Julie Christie and Victoria Wood.

Jonathan Dorsett, Campaigns Officer at Baby Milk Action, said:

"Those who have boycotted the Perrier Awards have really helped to raise awareness about Nestle's malpractice, and have helped to put Nestle under pressure to change. This must indicate to Nestle the strong feeling there is amongst the public that it needs to bring its activities into line with international legislation."

Patti Rundall OBE, Policy Director at Baby Milk Action, added:

"We must not forget that companies have a clear commercial agenda - and receive huge financial advantages from sponsoring cultural, educational and sporting events - compared to direct TV advertising for example - the costs are much lower. It is not altruism. Sometimes the sponsor gives just a top-up grant - yet its name appears everywhere. Companies use the benefits of the image enhancement in many ways, most worryingly in political arenas in order to get the legislation they want. Often their objectives - as in the case of Nestle - are in direct conflict with the health and welfare of society generally."

"Stockton-on-Tees Council refused Nestle sponsorship recently and has now drawn up strict guidelines which should ensure that they do not allow any company with a bad ethical record to sponsor them. They do not want to be drawn into a web of cause related marketing covering up unethical practices. It would be good if everyone adopted similar guidelines so that this type of problem is avoided."

For more information contact Baby Milk Action, 23 St Andrews Street, Cambridge, CB2 3AX, Tel: +44 1223 464420, Fax: +44 1223 464417.

For information on the Tap Water Award contact Suzanne Merrill - 0131 556 5204.

Some reports on the web:

[Baby Milk Action press release - 15 August 2001: African health campaigners welcome boycott of Perrier Award at the Edinburgh Fringe](#)

[The Scotsman - 21 August 2001: Comedian Thomas joins call for the Perrier boycott](#)

[Sunday Times - 12 August 2001: Hey, heard the one about the ethical comedian?](#)

[The Telegraph - 6 August 2001: Stars boycott Fringe awards for comedy](#)

[Yahoo - 6 August 2001: Campaigners call for Perrier Award boycott](#)

[BBC - 31 July 2001: Actress joins call for Perrier boycott](#)

[The Independent - 24 July 2001: Comedian calls for a boycott on Perrier Awards and 'corporate power'](#)

[The Scotsman - 24 July 2001: Comic battles to gag milk powder sponsor](#)

[BBC - 24 July 2001: Comedian calls for prize boycott](#)

Notes for editors:

Festival Round-up

A grand finale of bubbles and sneers



AND now the end is near and so we face the final curtain. The festival diary, that is. But we did it our way. Refreshments we had a few, but then again too few to mention. But more, much more than this, we hope we've given you a few eyes along the way which may have been of use. Such as way before the whole shebang got on the road, we tipped Gwyneth's way as this year's big hit. And who should bump into the other night, but author Greg Burke going it large.



After 30 years, Pinky and Perky hit the comicbook trail

Sentimentality is lost in a sea of true humanity

meticulously researched by playwright Margaret Johnson, who knew her subject at first hand. Now a kindergarten teacher and totally unimpressed at the acclaim surrounding her work, she gained experience as a student on the cancer hospital.

Thompson embraced it all with a vigour and a commitment, even shaving off all her hair in the cause of authenticity. At the time she joked: "I'll be sleeping in Pyjamas and a hat - no change of any sex."

Originally conceived for the small screen - it's an HBO production - *Wit* is the handiwork of Nichols, works in the cinema through his use of powerful close-ups (inspired by Scorsese's *McGravy*) which adds the result of any theatricality. Thompson has said that is why she liked it - "because it's so intimate and it's about someone talking to you and talking you by the hand and leading you off on a very personal journey".

Thompson's face becomes a map of the human spirit under the camera's unflinching gaze. Nichols and she choreographed the play for four months before they shot it over an intense five weeks, and she shares a writing credit. Such thoroughness of approach has respect dividends in the pacing and also the introduction of the memory sequences and fragments from her character's past.

It's not a cheap Klugeux trio that yuckies eye buttons

WIT *****
Film festival

After opening with *Audrey*, a colourful concoction that played on the feelgood factor, the Edinburgh International Film Festival draws to a close with a sharp shock of reality tempered by humanity and a biting, caustic sense of irony. Terminal disease in the cinema can either be mawkishly sentimental or simply nail-bitingly bleak. Mike Nichols's *Wit*, adapted from the Pulitzer Prize-winning play, is neither.

He reads the tightrope with a skill and sensitivity we have a right to expect from a director who, from *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* to



Even though Thompson gives everything to the role *Blood Blues* and *Comed Knowledge*, has demonstrated she knows precisely how to translate from stage to screen. The role of the distinguished academic who cannot quite come to terms with her terminal cancer, was

Simon Pia's Festival Diary

No water please

AS the Parrer comes go in to collect their things tonight, it's a man when we asked them how they felt about parent company Nestlé and Baby Milk's Action campaign.

However our own right-up credentials slipped a bit at the point-shoot.

When we arrived, we exchanged all offers of a bottle of fizzy water. We'd stick to the champagne. Instead, indeed to enforce the point we refused another offer of water and had another glass of the old shampoo. Slurping away in solidarity, a waitress slid up to us: "You know that's Laurent Parrer champagne you're drinking." Damn it, I'd almost

Seen to the National in London in mid-September after the festival (in brief, Dame Shirley Porter, no less, who is on the National board, was up with her sister and lived it. They even suggested a run on Broadway.

There had been suggestions Gwyneth should tone down the verbiage, but Marilyn was having none of it.

So, then, what has been the highlight of the Festival?

"Alex Orman's quest at Brix left Saturday," Billy bursts in. "Cunwray Scott and the diary would drink to that - in where else but our pint at the pub, The Phoenix in Broughton Street.

Don't fret if you bring into the "Jeffrey Archer of Just" the cat-hissel, Ivone Welch hanging around in the toilets with some of his chums. Harmless stuff just exposing that Courier moment.

But it was not as embarrassing as nominee Daniel Klinton's encounter the other night. Pointing to a man in the front row at his show, Daniel sneered: "You think you're cool, sitting there in dark glasses." There was a pause before the member of the audience explained he was blind. Followed by a longer pause. Then Daniel burst out: "What the hell are you looking up a good seat at the front for now, mate?"

Meanwhile we had a man in the front of the cab plugging comic Colin Farnham who's appearing at The Strand.

It was his dad, Max Calvert. "See that Nicholas Parsons, had Nim in the back the other night?" Ken told us but reckoned Nicholas thought he was getting culinary rather than cultural advice. "The show is called *Rain Supper*."

Meanwhile we bow out with our cultural flourish as we head off to Pinky and Perky tonight at the Assembly, their comeback gig after 30 years, first revealed, where else, but in the city.

It has not all been in vain as New York dolls Sylvia Miller and Penny Arcade assured us: "It was the most fun to read in the Festival."

Touché, ladies. WC: ya no come back again?

*Photos are the property of the photographer. Reproduction of any part of this page is prohibited without the written permission of the publisher. The publisher is not responsible for any loss or damage to any property. The publisher is not responsible for any loss or damage to any property. The publisher is not responsible for any loss or damage to any property.

screen acting after a gap of three years. It's easy to see why. The material has been

Dance and design in sublime synchronicity

Metropolis ★★☆☆

Elizabeth Sjöström

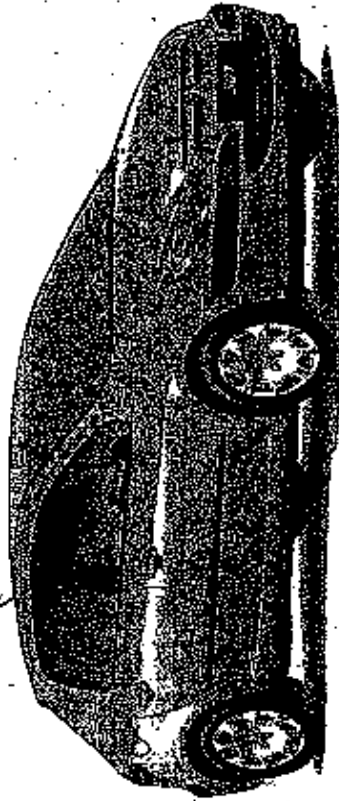
Dance and design have climbed into bed with each other and created one hell of an offspring. Directed by Bogdan Vanzago and Robert Flanagan and Requiza architect, Zaha Hadid, *Metropolis* is a feast for the eyes from start to finish.

This futuristic vision of life relies as much on film as choreography to make its point. A "blue screen" effect is used to project images of city life, laying the less attractive elements of modern living before us. Scenes of stock market

traders clanking desks are quickly followed by a town dominated by skyscraples.

While such juxtapositions may seem a bit clichéd, their presentation couldn't be more original. Hadid's set features three movable bridges which the dancers reposition in endless combinations. The action is fast to us in bite-size chunks, at times, it almost too fast to handle. We come to relish the quieter moments to enjoy the stunning design as simply lingers over a sublime moment of synchronicity.

Katy Allen
10th 28th August



307 LX

8 speeds

ABS with EBD and emergency brake assist
Electrically adjustable and heated rear mirrors

Remote control central locking with doorlocks

One touch electric front windows

Height adjustable driver/front passenger seats

60/40 split-folding rear seats

Driver and front

passenger centre armrests

PRON. JUST £11,980** OTR

3 years of warranty*

+ 2 year service intervals

307 RANGE STARTS AT £10,980*

Boycott Perrier?

What's the point?

Perrier, the world's biggest food company, bought Perrier in 1982 and continued with the Perrier brand. Perrier is a good public image. They are celebrities such as Emma Thompson, Helen Mirren, Victoria Beckham, and Thomas, Poo Newman and Jiffy Chicks calling for a boycott because of Nestlé's aggressive promotion of baby milk.

UNICEF has stated that reversing the decline in breastfeeding could save the lives of 1.5 million infants around the world every year. Yet, as our new monitoring report documents, Nestlé and its competitors continue to put profits before health by violating marketing requirements intended to protect all mothers and babies.

The World's Boycott Is Very Important For Making Awareness About Our People's Welfare and Women's Health.

In Africa and getting parents on health.

Positive Campaign, Health Campaign, Swedavia.

BABY MILK ACTION

I support the World's Boycott Please send me this information

I wish to join Baby Milk Action and receive:

£15 £7 (students) £20 family Donation of £

Donating for Baby Milk Action - evidence of violation of the World Health Assembly requirements £5.50

World's Boycott pack - information, posters, badges etc. £6

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Signature: _____

Baby Milk Action, Peacock, Cambridge, CB2 3RQ.
Tel: (01223) 464403. Credit card orders taken over the phone.
www.babymilkaction.org for information and on-line buy.

PEUGEOT 307

0845 200 1234 or visit www.peugeot.co.uk



PEUGEOT

Total Recall

1 Superstar Julia Roberts is allegedly having an affair with whom?
 a) Married cameraman Danny Moder
 b) Engaged footballer Fabien Barthez
 c) Divorced rocker Mick Jagger
 d) Divorced actor Tom Cruise

2 Rolling Stone Mick Jagger surprised readers

this week when he appeared on the cover of which magazine?

- a) Playgirl
- b) Playboy
- c) Saga
- d) Good Housekeeping

3 A daredevil was plucked from the top of which famous monument?

- a) The Eiffel Tower
- b) The Statue of Liberty
- c) Big Ben

d) The Wallace Monument

4 A mother of identical twins was surprised when she entered her girls in a Baby of the Year contest because ...

- a) They both won
- b) One won and the other was eliminated from the competition
- c) They tied for third
- d) They refused

the prize, they thought it was the Penzer Award

5 Actress Penelope Cruz had what tattooed on her leg?

- a) 883
- b) 666
- c) 911
- d) Get lost Nicole, Tom's all mine!

6 Which actress revealed she lost four stone by

having her face bread?

- a) Julia Roberts
- b) Vanessa Feltz
- c) Penelope Cruz
- d) Kate Winslet

7 Writer Irvine Welsh revealed his new book would be about what?

- a) Drugs
- b) Tattoos
- c) Sex
- d) Diets

8 Tony Blair's leadership

hopful Iain Duncan Smith was embarrassed when it was discovered one of his campaigners was ...

- a) On the cover of Saga magazine
- b) Having an affair with Julia Roberts
- c) Found dangling from the Statue of Liberty
- d) A BNP activist

The Scotsman 25.8.01

Scotland

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Steve Lintbridge



Winning team: Garth Marengi, centre, with sidekicks Alice Lowe and Dean Learner

Second time lucky as Marengi wins Perrier

GARTH MARENGHI was last night named the winner of the Perrier comedy award, writes *Caroline Wilson*.

The award for best newcomer was given to Garth Cruickshank and Eddie McCabe for *Let's Have a Shambles*.

Marengi, who lost out to American comic Rich Hall last year, picked up the award at a ceremony at Her Majesty's Theatre, Haymarket.

The awards have attracted controversy this year due to the

all-male shortlist and the involvement of Perrier's owners, Nestle, in marketing powdered baby milk in developing countries.

The Perrier is the UK's premier comedy award and was created in 1981 to support young talent. It has helped launch the careers of Stephen Fry, Frank Skinner and Jenny Eclair.

The judging panel consisted of media professionals and members of the public, who

attend shows from the first day of the festival.

In recent times, the winner has been guaranteed the interest of talent-seeking TV producers, and the prize can be a springboard to much greater things.

Recognising that some of the newer acts trying to break into the big time were being overlooked, Perrier added a best newcomer category in 1992.

Has the Perrier lost its fizz? Focus, page 14

Fun blazode: Jswmy
 Extern: 2001 the Perrier
 award in 1995. But last
 year Rich Hall, night
 came out on top.

HAS THE PERRIER LOST ALL ITS FIZZ?

Jilla Morris teeters on her high heels offshore, wrapped tightly in a towel that has gone from comedy to tragedy. She can already sense the steady, smoke-filled atmosphere in the auditorium.

Expectancy booms over the crowd at Edinburgh's Assembly Rooms like a low frequency buzz, the small of this room hangs heavy in the air. She opens her stand-up routine with an anecdote about the comrade who once introduced her by saying "She's a woman, so she definitely

is capable of allocating a night in a changing room. But for the Perrier judges, puns and laughs just don't cut. For the sixth year running there is no woman on the short list for the "biggest sh*tty" prize as often, even though

to ensure a sellout. Going winners were guaranteed, really appearances, their own television series and tabloid attention has their prizes live. Perrier helped form comedy into the new rock 'n' roll. The award was established

ing consideration of the award has nothing to do with comedy but with the questionable merits of industry prizes. Instead, to count the judges' involvement of Scottish television's perrier company, which offers temporary members of

er is a target because it plays into the fears that stand-up comedy is taking over the stage. But I think the Perrier judges' are pretty good at picking winners. Their fingers on the

erene the impression that comedy is the fringe. With 180 acts this year, many will dream of being nominated for the Perrier, because it is high. Most comedians admit the award is divisive, even if they say so under their breath. "I've always said it. The Perrier is a target because it plays into the fears that stand-up comedy is taking over the stage. But I think the Perrier judges' are pretty good at picking winners. Their fingers on the

For the sixth year running no female comics have appeared on the Edinburgh Festival's Perrier award shortlist. That might be because the once coveted prize has become the joke, writes Phil Miller



Source: Scotland on Sunday
Date: Sunday 26. August 2001
Page: 4

Circulation: ABC 102997 Weekly
Ad Rates: page rate £124,500.00
scc rate £0.00
Tel: 0131 225 2488

Nestle

(D4008-1)

Fizzing mad: director attacks Perrier protesters

THE director of the Perrier Award has accused celebrities who urged a boycott of the comedy prize of "breaking the spirit" of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, writes Gina Davidson.

Nica Burns, right, speaking for the first time about the controversy, said she "could not believe" the actions of

Roma Thompson, Victoria Wood and others.

They backed a campaign by protest group Baby Milk Action, which urged comedians to refuse to take part in the Perrier because the company is owned by conglomerate Nestlé, which controversially markets its

breast-milk substitute in the Third World.

Speaking exclusively to Scotland on Sunday, Burns said she was "frustrated" by the opposition.

"The hard work of my team and that of lots of very talented comics has basically given this group a great big

present called more publicity than you've ever had in your life," she said.

A spokesman for Nestlé said: "Many of the allegations are years out of date and have long been rectified."



NEWS

Glass act: Perrier Award goes to reclusive trio

THE lucrative Perrier Award has gone to an act featuring spoof horror novelist Garth Marenghi, writes *Sina Davidson*.

The show, called *Netherhead*, is performed by a trio of reclusive actors, right, who have refused to disclose their real names. They received £5,000 at last night's award ceremony, which was hit by controversy again after around 70 protesters picketed the event in Edinburgh, outraged at the promotion by Perrier's parent company, Nestlé, of breast-milk substitutes in the third world.

The title of best newcomer went to the duo of Garth Cruickshank and Eddie McCabe for their show *Let's Have a Sitambizes!*

For the trio behind Garth Marenghi it was second time lucky as they lost out last year to the US comedian Rich Hall.

Meanwhile, protesters promised their campaign against the Perrier Award will continue in future years and disclosed they will be petitioning the Fringe director, Paul Gudgeon, to find alternative sponsorship for the comedy festival.





Spoof horror writer wins £5,000 Perrier award

Fringe comedy contest soured by baby milk protests

Kirsty Scott

The spoof horror writer Garth Marengi scooped the Perrier comedy award in Edinburgh yesterday after a contest soured by protests over powdered milk and accusations that the event had lost its sparkle.

Marengi, whose merciless lampooning of pulpy horror novels has won widespread critical acclaim, fought off competition from four other male contenders for the £5,000 award, which has traditionally been seen as one of the high points of the Edinburgh festival fringe.

This year, however, the award scheme was attacked by former winners Rob Newman and Emma Thompson, who backed calls for a boycott by the group Baby Milk Action because of the involvement of Perrier's owners, Nestlé, in marketing powdered baby milk in developing countries.

Yesterday, Nica Burns, director and publisher of the awards, rebuffed the criticism and accused those who had called for a boycott of "breaking the spirit of the fringe".

Other critics, however, said the awards, which were celebrating their 21st anniversary this year, had lost their edge and had been devalued by the lack of female nominees. For the sixth year running there were no female comics on the final shortlist. Jenny Eclair was the last woman to win the prize, in 1995.

The award is still considered

one of the biggest accolades in comedy, however, and previous winners, including Steve Coogan, Frank Skinner and the League of Gentlemen, have used it as a springboard for their showbiz careers.

The Garth Marengi team will now have the opportunity to appear in London as part of the acclaimed Perrier Pick of the Fringe Season in the West End in October.

This year's show centred around Marengi's latest work, *Netherhead*, said to be the darkest book he has ever written. "It will peel back the layers of your mind until your brains fall out," Marengi's previous works include *Dawn Waters*, a terrifying tale of urine infection; *Black Fang* (Rats learn to drive); and *Slicer*, a novel about a flying knife.

Speaking yesterday, Marengi — who won't reveal his off-stage alter ego — said he was delighted to receive the award and had been inspired in his

latest work by a bout of sickness and an eye infection. "Bram Stoker ate a bad crab; Robert Louis Stevenson had a gippy tummy — well, he was quite ill, actually; and I had flu and a sty."

Asked for his reaction to the baby milk protests, Marengi's publisher, Dean Learner, said: "I have instructed Garth not to discuss anything he doesn't understand."

The other nominees for the 2001 award were Dan Antopolski for his show *Antopolski 2000*, Jason Byrne, Australian-born Adam Hills (Go

fringe shows next year to ensure children are not exposed to unsuitable material.

City officials said it is was not always clear from promotional literature what kind of material the shows actually contained and parents needed more information.

"It is embarrassing for the competition, for the rest of the audience and I'm sure for the parents when young children are in the audience," said Steve Cardownie, the council's arts convener.

"I will be looking at doing anything the council can within its powers to give parents as much guidance as possible."

News, reviews, previews at guardian.co.uk/edinburghfestival2001

Links

- www.perrierawards.com
- Perrier awards
- www.babymilkaction.org/press/press25aug01.html
- Awards boycott

latest work by a bout of sickness and an eye infection. "Bram Stoker ate a bad crab; Robert Louis Stevenson had a gippy tummy — well, he was quite ill, actually; and I had flu and a sty."

Asked for his reaction to the baby milk protests, Marengi's publisher, Dean Learner, said: "I have instructed Garth not to discuss anything he doesn't understand."

The other nominees for the 2001 award were Dan Antopolski for his show *Antopolski 2000*, Jason Byrne, Australian-born Adam Hills (Go





Marengi wins Perrier

GARETH MARENGHI last night won the Perrier Comedy Award, the Edinburgh Fringe Festival's most prestigious prize.

He fought off competition from four other male contenders, Dan Antopolski, Jason Byrne, Australian-born Adem Hills and

cheque and the opportunity to appear in the acclaimed Perrier Pick of the Fringe Season in the West End in October.

More than 160 shows were eligible this year for the Perrier award, which is celebrating its 21st anniversary. Previous winners include Steve Coogan, Frank Skinner and The League Of Gentlemen.

presented to Let's Have A Shambles!, a show by Edinburgh pub quiz suprema Gerth Crulckshank.

This year the Perrier came under attack from former winners Rob Newman and Emma Thompson, who called for a boycott because of the involvement of Perrier's owners Nestlé in marketing powdered baby milk in developing countries.



Source: Herald (Glasgow)
 Date: Monday 27. August 2001
 Page: 5
 Circulation: ABC 100803 Daily
 Ad Rates: page rate £11,500.00
 net rate £28.50
 Tel: 0141 302 7000
 Nestle

(D4008-1)

Success behind the winners

DAVID BELCHER

THIS year's Perrier Award victory was almost certainly more of a success for the promoters of the winning Fringe performers than it was for the successful act!

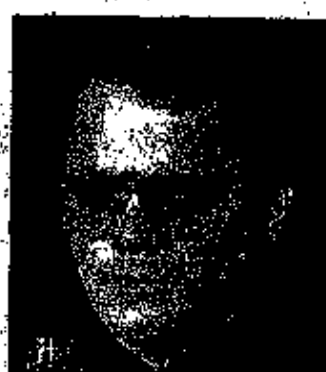
A prize of £5000 and a London West End stage run went to Matt Holness, Dean Learner, and Alice Lowe, the three actors behind spoof genre/horror author Garth Marenghi, a self-declaring purveyor of pathetic junk fiction.

However, for London-based management agency Avalon, a fourth Perrier win in the past 10 years confirms it as Britain's prime shaper of emerging comedy talent.

It is now highly likely that the Garth Marenghi trio's two Fringe dramas to date, *Netherhead* and *Fright Knight*, will soon follow the TV sitcom path of the last Avalon Perrier winner, *Al Murray*.

This year's Perrier was also notable in providing a long-overdue win for native Edinburgh talent. Two decades after the Perrier's birth, Edinburgh comics Garth Cnuckshank and Eddie McCabe scored a native Scottish first by winning the Perrier newcomer title with their pub quiz-derived show, *Let's Have A Shambles*.

In another first, Saturday night's Perrier announcement was covered live on TV, by Chan-



GARTH MARENGHI: Spoof character is the real winner

nel 4's *Edinburgh Or Bust*. During the course of the somewhat shambolic broadcast, former Perrier victor Steve Coogan gave a mischievous impromptu interview in the character of his latest big-screen creation, Simon Garden, star of *The Parole Officer*.

Coogan was evidently mindful of the early controversy surrounding this year's Perrier, with former winner Emma Thompson having vainly called upon Fringe performers to withdraw from the event in protest against Perrier's parent company, Nestlé, for its involvement in selling powdered breast milk to the developing world.

Asked for his Perrier verdict by interviewer Iain Lee, Coogan had one cheerful statement: "Boycott Nestlé!"



NEW STATESMAN

27 AUGUST 2001

£2.20

**MARK
thomas**



Boycotts do work, but asking a comic to join in this one is like trying to recruit a Teletubby to the Zapatistas

Any activist or campaigner should be able to tell you about the problems of powdered baby milk. For a start, unscrupulous drug dealers* keep cutting cocaine with infant formula, which results in extremely healthy, nutritionally enriched nostrils and a good night's sleep. Which might explain why Keith Richards is still alive. At certain times in his life, he has probably been doing a pint of infant formula a day. This, when combined with sheep's blood transfusions at private Swiss clinics, is bound to have an adverse effect on his intake of Jack Daniel's. For Nestlé and other baby milk manufacturers, it is ironic that the use of their products in the drugs trade is so benign compared to the way they are used in the developing world.

After the links were established between infant mortality and the misuse of baby milk formula, the World Health Organisation established a code of practice for the manufacturers. This was the least they could do, considering that the WHO itself states that, if the downward trend in breastfeeding were reversed, a million infant lives could be saved each year. Today, the boycott of Nestlé products, in protest against the company's marketing practices, is the longest-running boycott in the world. And because Perrier is owned by Nestlé, it was inevitable that, sooner or later, activists would target the Perrier Award for Comedy at the Edinburgh Festival. For the past three weeks, this story has rumbled gently on in the broadsheets.

Asking comics to boycott the award is an unenviable task. Frankly, you would have more luck recruiting the Teletubbies to the Zapatistas (though Tinky Winky would be instantly recognisable, even in a balaclava). I was nominated for the award a few years ago; it has high prestige and I understand why comics want to win it. But I have spoken to doctors working in Pakistan who are furious at the effects of baby milk on infant health in their country, as well as to health officials in Malawi and Zimbabwe, one of whom compared Nestlé's actions to "ethnic cleansing". Although some comics have been sympathetic to the issue, others have shown all the political sophistication of Mike Gatting, who, as he led a cricket team to South Africa during the apartheid years, stated that boycotts have no effect.

Liberals and the left have nearly always supported consumer boycotts; the right believes them to be counter-productive unless they involve anything French or German, in which case we are giving the Krauts/Frogs a bloody nose and reliving the spirit of the Blitz. There are exceptions: in the mid-1980s, the Revolutionary Communist Party believed that there should be no sanctions on the South African apartheid regime, as sanctions would not advance a revolutionary situation. I had visions of RCP activists gleefully eating Cape apples during their meetings, safe in the knowledge

that the more the workers were oppressed, the sooner they would overthrow the bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, it is just as easy to conjure up images of well-meaning liberals wandering around the supermarket, ticking off the goods they shouldn't purchase and cupping their ears for the sound of multinationals falling to their knees. However, it is worth remembering that the threat of boycotts of GM foods forced companies and governments to rethink their plans.

In the case of baby milk, a lot has been achieved since the early days when Nestlé promoted Carnation Milk as "a food par excellence for delicate infants"**, a line that the company dropped in 1977, the year the boycott began. The creation of the WHO code in 1981, and its continual updating, are in part due to campaigning groups such as Baby Milk Action. This has not saved enough infant lives, but it has undoubtedly saved some.

Boycotts can be extremely precise. Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the National League for Democracy in Burma, has asked tourists not to visit the country, because the military regime benefits directly from their money. Because Lonely Planet publishes a travel guide to Burma, pro-democracy campaigners organised a boycott of the firm's publications. Lonely Planet expected to sell 4,000 copies of the Burma guide in the UK, so the campaigners gathered more than 4,000 signatures from people promising not to buy its products. The effect was to wipe out any profit the company might make from its book on Burma, and to highlight the issue in the media.

Has this actually helped the people of Burma? Because many tourist hotels and facilities there are built using forced labour – Mandalay airport is one of the most recent examples – we can safely conclude that it hasn't done any harm. If the tourist numbers drop, so will the use of forced labour.

The World Trade Organisation's mission of trade liberalisation continues to increase the "rights" of multinationals. Add to this the sheer financial force of companies such as Nestlé (its yearly promotional budget is more than the total state expenditure of the world's 28 poorest countries) and you have a situation where companies often have more power than democratically elected governments. In such circumstances, choosing which goods you buy, and which you won't, is more than liberal hand-wringing. It is actually a form of democracy. Boycotts may not lead us to the land of breast milk and honey, but they certainly help.

* As opposed to the ethical drug dealers, who have nothing to do with Colombian death squads, who use their profits for community developments, and who are currently seeking to market their produce with a Fair Trade label

** It isn't



Source: Morning Star
Date: Monday 27. August 2001
Page: 6
Circulation: Daily
Ad Rates: page rate £1,840.00
 acc rate £5.18
 020 7538 5181
Tel:
BABY MILK

(D4008-1)



Protest hits fringe award

ANTI-NESTLE campaigners protested outside the Perrier Comedy Awards in Edinburgh at the weekend to protest at the firm's aggressive marketing of powdered baby milk in the Third World.

Previous winners Rob Newman and Emma Thompson had called for a boycott of the awards when Gareth Marengi picked up the £5,000 prize.

Previous winners, including Steve Coogan, Frank Skinner and the League of Gentlemen, have used the award as a springboard for their showbiz careers.





Source: Aberdeen Press & Journal
Date: Monday 27, August 2001
Page: 18
Circulation: ABC 100421 Daily
Ad Rates: page rate £9,892.00
sec rate £21.50
Q1224 680222
Tel:
Nestle

(D4008-1)

Page 1 of

Award boost for festival comic

THE winner of this year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival's most prestigious comedy award is Gareth Marengi.

He fought off competition from four other male contenders for the Perrier Comedy Award, which is traditionally one of the festival's high points.

The other nominees were Dan Antopolski, Jason Byrne, Australian-born Adam Hills, and Daniel Kitson.

Gareth Marengi picked up a £5,000 cheque and the opportunity to appear in London as part of the acclaimed Perrier Pick of the Fringe Season in the West End in October.

More than 160 shows were eligible this year for the Perrier award, which is celebrating its 21st anniversary.

Previous winners, including Steve Coogan and Frank Skinner, have used the award as a springboard for their showbusi-

ness careers. This year it came under attack from former winners Rob Newman and Emma Thompson, who called for a boycott of the award because of the involvement of Perrier's owners, Nestle, in marketing powdered baby milk in developing countries.

Nica Burns, director and producer of the Perrier Awards, rebutted the criticism and accused the pair of being "out of touch".



Press Release

Tap Water Awards take off -

Video clips: Emma Thompson and Steve Coogan support the Nestlé/Perrier boycott

28th August 2001

Over one hundred comedy acts supported the Perrier boycott and entered for the corporate-free Tap Water Awards at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. The Perrier Award went ahead at the weekend.

All entrants to the Tap Water Award received a plug (and a chain).

The format of the awards in future will be decided in the coming year. Emma Thompson has offered to present prizes. Emma was in the Cambridge Footlights team which won the first Perrier Award in 1981, before Perrier was swallowed by Nestlé in 1992.

She was present at the fringe and recorded a message for Baby Milk Action. Steve Coogan, another past winner, also recorded a message.

See them below.



Tally Ho proudly show off their prize as entrants to the corporate-free Tap Water Awards.



Emma Thompson gave a message of support for Baby Milk Action after a question and answer session on her new film, *Wit*. To download and view the clip click on the above image. You need a QuickTime plug in - your browser should locate this for you (if not, see [the Apple website](#)).

Emma said:

"I've just been banging on about the Nestlé boycott which I think is terribly important. It's been important for a very long time. I'm very surprised actually about how many people have been talking about it recently and who don't know about it. Don't know about Nestlé's record of extreme violations of advertising standards (i.e. the International Code and Resolutions adopted by the World Health Assembly) in countries where we don't live, so of course, we don't know what's going on. And I think that recent events have certainly proved that it's about time we started questioning the big companies and their practices because a lot of these things are just done in the name of big business. I think it's time they started to answer a few questions. So right

on, and all power to the boycott Nestlé campaign from me."



Steve Coogan, winner of the Perrier Award in 1992, said (click the above image to download and view the clip):

"Hi, I'm Steve Coogan and I wholeheartedly and totally support Baby Milk Action and the Nestlé boycott. My opinion is what Nestlé are doing in the third world is abhorrent. I fully support anybody who wishes to boycott Nestlé, I say go ahead and keep boycotting them until they change their policy."

Nestlé's marketing policy was exposed as failing to comply with the *International Code and Resolutions* at a Public Hearing at the European Parliament last year (see [Press Release 23 November 2000](#) and [Boycott News 29](#)). Nestlé refused to attend the Hearing where evidence was presented by [IBFAN](#) and UNICEF.

Baby Milk Action recently put a four-point plan to Nestlé aimed at saving infant lives and ultimately ending the boycott, but this was immediately rejected by Nestlé (see [Boycott News 29](#)). Nestlé refuses to accept the position of the World Health Assembly, the policy setting body of the World Health Organisation. The Assembly adopted the *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* in 1981 as a minimum health requirement for all countries (see [Resolution WHA34.22](#)). Companies are required to abide by the Code independently of government implementation (see [Article 11.3](#)). Subsequent Resolutions have addressed questions of interpretation and changes in marketing practices and scientific knowledge.

For further information contact [Baby Milk Action](#) on 01223 464420 or Jonathan Dorsett, Campaigns Officer on 07949 180050 or Patti Rundall, Policy Director on 07760 287001.

Notes for editors

1. Also see the past press releases [25th August 2001](#), [15 August 2001](#) and [31st July 2001](#).
2. Tally Ho are Charlie Ottley - mob: 07939 327828 tel:01962 732722 and Nicholas Perry mob: 07951 286017 tel: 01832 273973

Baby Milk Action is a member of the International Baby Food Action Network

◀ [press release index](#)

▲
[top](#)



Source: Morning Star
Date: Wednesday 29. August 2001
Page: 10

Circulation: Daily
Ad Rates: page rate £1,840.00
ecc rate £5.18
Tel: 020 7638 5191

Nestle

(04008-1)

Page 1 of 1

Cut Star plugs for Nestle

I WRITE to congratulate you on the Milk campaign seeks Perrier boycott article (M Star August 7).

As a member of Baby Milk Action, I was pleased to see coverage of an issue that is largely ignored by the media.

However, this only fuelled my annoyance over the photo accompanying a story in the paper last week.

It was about phone abuse suffered in call centres and there was a relatively large photo of two phone boxes.

This, in itself, seemed unrelated but the main problem was that these two phone boxes carried full-size Kit Kat/Nestle advertisements that could very clearly be seen.

I was surprised and dismayed at the Morning Star for giving free advertising space to Nestle.

I trust that this will not happen again and I look forward to your continued support of Baby Milk Action and, in particular, the worldwide Nestle boycott.

RUTH RITCHIE

Leeds





COUGH PROTESTER: Actor Ricky Tomlinson who has turned down a big Nestlé advert offer

Lucrative biscuit ad fails to get Royle seal of approval

ROYLE Family star Ricky Tomlinson has rejected "a massive" cash offer from Nestlé to front a chocolate biscuit commercial.

Tomlinson was approached by the multinational to appear in one of their biggest campaigns of the year. But he said yesterday: "Until they sort out this baby milk problem in the Third World I won't do anything for them."

Nestlé has been targeted by activists for offering powdered baby milk to nursing mothers in the developing world. Protesters say it is often

mixed with contaminated water, causing illness.

Tomlinson, 65, admitted that he - like his character Jim Royle - loves chocolate biscuits, but for moral reasons does not want to be associated with the makers of KitKat and Smarties.

A spokeswoman for the protest group Baby Milk Action said: "We are extremely pleased to hear that Ricky is supporting our campaign."

He is not the only actor to have made a point of going against the billion-dollar company. British comedian Rob Newman called for a

boycott of the Perrier Awards at this year's Fringe Festival in protest at allegations that Nestlé had broken rules to market its breast-milk substitutes in the Third World. Nestlé owns the company that makes Perrier water.

Other celebrities backing the group include Emma Thomson, Julie Christie, Julie Walters, Steve Coogan and Jane Asher.

Nestlé said protesters' arguments are no longer relevant. A spokesman said: "Many of the allegations are years out of date and have been rectified."

