

# Does Kylie Mole come from another planet?



With IAN WARDEN

**I** MISSED a chunk of *Exploring Psychic Powers* (Prime, Thursday, 8.30) because I was attending a *live* entertainment, a concert presented by the winsome rabble who attend after school care at my local primary school.

I mention this not only to make the point that I do sometimes peel myself away from the Sanyo but also so as to be able to report the baneful influence that another television program, *The Comedy Company*, is having on popular culture.

Several of the acts in this concert were impersonations of the *Comedy Company* actress Maryanne Fahey, who plays Kylie Mole, and who also has begun the invincibly unamusing portrayal of a lisping toddler who brandishes the torso of a doll. And that baneful influence is not just influencing primary school children. I attended a showing of *Rain Man* one afternoon last week, in a cinema largely given over to several hundred louts from a high school (film going appears to be a part of the new

going appears to be a part of the new, relevant, with-it curriculum) and whenever Tom Cruise swore the high school students would say "That's wewd, isn't it?" in imitation of the aforementioned toddler.

Ms Fahey is so influential that it is tempting to speculate that she may have psychic powers or may even be from outer space and bent on softening up the minds of the inhabitants of spaceship earth in preparation for invasion. This is a scenario that must have commended itself to millions of American and Australian credulists who tuned in to *Exploring Psychic Powers* only to find, to their horror, that this was a program designed by and giving employment to sceptics. Most pugnacious of all was a James Randy, a man who took such considerable delight in socking it to credulists and to the frauds who bamboozle them that he must be a candidate for the Nobel Prize for Scoffing.

Randy's assault on psychic surgery, a ploy much employed in the credulous Philippines and a thing which beguiled, among others, the readily beguiled Peter Sellers, was gory but fair. He showed how, by having a little gore and some chicken giblets in the fist, a practitioner of this art could offer the illusion of

**this art could offer the illusion of having penetrated the skin, reached into the body, ripped out the offend-**

**ing growth and closed up the body without a scar. My sceptical children writhed through this demonstration and I was reminded that even Tony Roche, the sceptical tennis player, went to a psychic surgeon in the Philippines for treatment for his tennis elbow.**

**I have tennis elbow too but I would no more go to the Philippines to have it treated than I would go to Lourdes in search of a cure for a wrenched prostate.**

**The sceptics behind *Exploring Psychic Powers*, like those behind organised scepticism in Australia, had offered an enormous sum of money to anyone who could demonstrate psychic powers during the course of a monitored test. The \$100,000 they proffered lured some frauds into the limelight. A fraud claiming to be a dowser was unable to detect which of 20 boxes contained water and which contained something else, a "professional psychic and metaphysician" made a complete mess of divining which watches and key rings belonged to their 12 owners and sundry soothsayers proffered predictions that simply did not come true.**

**A**ND, AS compere Bill Bixby pointed out, no member of the soothsayers calling had offered the world a prediction of what had just come to pass in China, or the death of the Ayatollah or of the shocking explosion in the USSR.

**I dare say that before I got home, an organic gardener had been invit-**

an organic gardener had been invited to show that vegetables grown according to the phases of the moon were bigger and better than those just grown willy nilly. He or she had obviously failed to demonstrate such a thing because the \$100,000 was still on offer when I darkened my door.

Perhaps I also missed Ms Shirley Maclaine, who, in her radical credulousness, is the sort of jezebel who would haunt such a program, but I was home in time for Uri Geller, the

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smooth conjurer and the Tom Cruise of the New Age, as he took calls from three or four people across the United States who had gone to their cellars to pick up their broken clocks, radios and vibrators not picked up since the 1960s and who had found them kick-started again by Uri's magic vibes.

Of course the 50 million Americans who picked up things in their cellars and who did not find them kick-started did not phone in and the three or four whose contraptions stopped ticking and vibrating soon after they had phoned in did not call back to contribute this information but these considerations did not trouble the oleaginous Uri who, to his credit, is just an accomplished spiv rather than a Maclainesque loon.

While it was a fine thing to have such a sceptical extravaganza broadcast I was a little unhappy with the courtesy shown to the charlatans by Bixby. The dowser and the professional psychic and metaphysician were not hooted off the stage and nelted with dead cats and organical.

pelted with dead cats and organically grown vegetables but were thanked for their cooperation and praised for the "courage" they had shown in taking part. At the very least I think that Wally Lewis should have been hired to spit at them.

**T**HE CREDULISTS struck back the following morning on *Good Morning Australia* (Capital, 7.00) as Mike Gibson interviewed, with undue earnestness, the bwana of UFORA, the newly-formed Unidentified Flying Objects Research Association.

This worthy, a Bryan Dickeson, sounded and looked perfectly normal except for the carefully sculpted beard and moustache which are so often an indication of exceptional vanity and strangeness on the part of the wearer. Blessed are those who do not see and yet still believe and Mr Dickeson, though he had never seen any little aquamarine men himself was impressed by those who say that they have and who report that the crews of the UFOs "all have a general humanoid look to them", a vague description which is also true of Young Liberals.

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