

# Boyle's lanced by Katie

## TELEVISION

By David Stephenson



**N**OW HERE'S a shock. Katie Price has done a decent television show. Probability suggested that it might eventually happen but it wasn't expected so soon. **Katie: Standing Up For Harvey** (*Sky Living HD, Thursday*) was a 60-minute rebuttal to comedian Frankie Boyle's outrageous comments about her disabled son.

Harvey, who is now 10 and unable to answer for himself, has many health problems and should never have been the victim of a public attack in this way.

The slurs were made on Boyle's Channel 4 "comedy" show and are unrepeatable in a family newspaper. The regulator Ofcom received 500 complaints but Boyle has never issued an apology to Price, and I doubt ever will.

The refreshing aspect to this Katie Price film was the fact that it was about someone else other than herself but not including a current boyfriend/husband/acquaintance. It's not that she didn't feature in it, along with her huge house, her two ugly dogs, her Range Rovers, her mother, her grand staircase and her nanny, but that it wasn't simply another one of those lazy, fly-on-the-wall concoctions suggesting nail bars are modern temples of thought.

The film didn't really gain any traction until the second half. It was taking surprisingly longer than expected to warm to the glamour model once known as Jordan. Finally, Price talked to comedian Olivia Lee from Comedy Central, hardly a household name, but who made the point that Boyle relies on shock value to make his comedy work. Then she made an extraordinary claim: "He

doesn't mean it!"

Which makes it fine to do, then? What a ridiculous statement. If this was going to be the basis of the defence we could expect from Boyle, it was hardly worth seeking.

Price then interviewed actress and writer Victoria Wright, who has cherubism, a condition which makes the face look enlarged and disproportionate. You might recall her from the Channel 4 series *Cast Offs*, about disabled people. Amazing to think this channel can entertain both Frankie Boyle and *Cast Offs* in the same schedule.

Wright was scathing about Boyle. She said: "There's nothing gutsy in that." She too had been on the receiving end of offensive comments from lazy comedians. In this instance, the comics had joked about her condition on a panel show on radio. The manager of the station had apologised but not the comedians themselves. "They just don't care about bigotry," said Wright. No, they make a living from it.

Harvey is better off than many disabled children with Price obviously able to pay for care. Price's mother is in attendance, too. However, if a comedian can do nothing better than joke about disabled children he should really get out of the game. This may be the first and last "serious" film from Katie Price but at least she did it. Thought-provoking Katie Price. There's a thing.

**T**HERE is more and more 3D television content now available. Last week I watched ballet, speedway, snowboarding and rugby union, in order of appreciation. Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake* (*Sky 3D, Monday*) was spectacular. Much like the introduction of high definition television, you do find yourself watching just about anything, as long as it has an extra dimension. On reflection, maybe not *The One Show*. The first thing you notice about 3D,

apart from having an extra pair of glasses plonked on your nose, is how the graphics pop out of the screen. However man cannot live on graphics alone.

Ballet is not a natural home for me

but in 3D it is compelling. You can't follow it, of course, but it looks lovely. Indeed, filming any stage production would be similar because it's simply shot in a box. On the future prospects of ballet, a bit of dialogue every now and then wouldn't go astray. Just a thought.

**Secrets Of The Pop Song** (BBC2, last night) was a fascinating watch. The idea behind the series is to marvel at the expertise of songwriter Guy Chambers who has written for Robbie Williams, which is mostly a good thing, and who seems to be able to knock out a tune over his cornflakes.

For three episodes he is working with different singers to develop a new song. First up was Rufus Wainwright, who has apparently written an opera but "can't play Happy Birthday on the piano".

There were other illuminating facts in this show. I was exhausted. *Candle In The Wind* is the biggest single in history; *Yesterday* is the most covered song and REM's *Everybody Hurts* is most likely to make men cry. Grow up, you lot.

So what about the Chambers/Wainwright song? It was all a little concerning initially, as Chambers's first idea was based on the attack of North Korea on their southern neighbours. He wanted to call it *World War Three*; I wanted to call it a bad idea.

It turned out it wasn't, which is why I don't write songs for Robbie Williams.

It was also a very good tune, catchy, even to the point of annoying. The best line in the show went to Wainwright on Whitney Houston: "This is the sort of song you hear before jumping off the balcony."

Finally congratulations to **Lead Balloon** (BBC2, *Tuesday*) for a marvellous two-hander between Jack

