



Shake, rattles and roll: skating tots a video hit

By CAROLINE MARCUS

THEY'RE the roller-skating babies who have stolen the hearts of millions.

The commercial for mineral water brand Evian, which features more than 100 tots performing stunts to the beat of hip-hop music, has been watched more than 12 million times on internet video site YouTube.

It screened on television in France, Belgium and Canada earlier this month, but it is unclear if there are plans to air it in Australia.

Michael Gracey and Peter Commins are the Sydney directors behind the 60-second film clip. Mr Gracey, 33, said trying to make a film with 134 babies was "basically very degrading".

"You find yourself rattling rattles, singing, basically acting like a complete and utter fool to get the baby to look one way or to smile or look down. It is a very humiliating process," he said.

The pair shot the background for the clip in Melbourne - mostly



in the Royal Botanic Gardens - later using digital technology to make the scenery resemble New York's Central Park.

They flew to Prague, in the Czech Republic, to cast and film babies aged between six and eight months.

Finally in London, they used a digital technology called "motion capture" to superimpose the babies' faces and arms onto animation based on the movements of dancers recorded



jumping over fences, doing backflips and breakdancing.

Todd Sampson, chief executive of advertising agency Leo Burnett, said launching a campaign virally had become a safe way for clients to test an ad's appeal before making the financial commitment to put it on television.

"Launching online is no longer niche because for many people, their computer is now their main screen," he said.

He said the ad tapped into one

of the three success secrets of advertising, which are "sex, puppies and babies". "Everyone loves to see cute babies - it lowers our defences and basically shuts off our critical bullshit detectors. This ad is interesting because it's cute and weird at the same time."

> See the video on our website

