

Television & Radio

Weekend Choice Martin Hoyle

Television

Saturday afternoon's England v Wales game in **Six Nations Rugby** (BBC1 3.25pm) should not upstage the earlier Ireland v Italy match (1pm), contributing to an Italianate frame of mind for tonight's

Inspector Montalbano (BBC4 9pm).

In perhaps the most enjoyable story yet, the underlying mood is breezily cynical, notwithstanding some rococo sexual tendencies. The character of the *commissario* himself is acquiring depth and warmth, and the plot's convoluted love, politics and corruption exude an almost Chanderlesque tough chivalry. ★★☆☆☆

For Saturday night froth, try the entertainingly nostalgic **I'm in a Boy Band!** (BBC2 9.20pm). Pop indulging in self-important analysis is half endearing, half irritating, presenting the obvious with the amazement of a loofah-wielding Archimedes. Halfway through they discover it's about the sex appeal of male ensembles. References to the Beatles make it all the stranger that the Rolling Stones are never mentioned. Perhaps they were never boys, but leapt born roués from the womb. ★★☆☆☆

"A woman called Kennedy" rings 165 Eaton Square. "She sounds American." On Sunday, BBC1's **Upstairs Downstairs** (9pm) is in its best "Good morning, Dickens/Good morning, *The takeover*" form.

Is CIA agent Carrie a raving psychotic? Damian Lewis of the deceptively pursed mouth, surely hiding piranha teeth, and Claire Danes, guzzling her mysterious medication, actually make us want to know. ★★☆☆☆

Radio

Radio 4's *Saturday Drama* is **Noughts and Crosses** (2.30pm), Janice Okoh's adaptation of Malorie Blackman's novel of a society where dominant blacks oppress subservient whites. This mirror image of apartheid is detailed with imaginative Swiftian logic, down to "blanker", the equivalent of our racist N-word. Jolting dystopian satire turns into *Romeo and Juliet* with a dash of political thriller in Marion Nancarrow's riveting production.

★★★★☆

Radio 3's once avant-garde slot **The Wire** provides a neatly conventional black fable, *The Takeover* (9.30pm), an ingenious tale of the soft underbelly of business: double-double-cross and then some. ★★☆☆☆

Sunday's **The Living World** (Radio 4 6.35am) shows where flies go in winter. The engagingly fanatic Dr Erica McAlister reveals that only female mosquitos are bloodsuckers (males have "massive genitalia"), humped gnats "like Quasimodo" are "sleek and sexy" and claims "everybody