

NETWORK TV SELECTIONS

foreign attaché in the Third World. The Empire may be dead, but my god the colonial imperialist spirit lives on in this romp through the 'generous deeds' we Brits have done for poor darkies who don't even know how to use a 50p tin maize scraper. No mention of the way we Brits bled them dry in order to establish the Empire over which the sun sets. A sadly misguided programme which tries to show the way developing countries can be given a helping hand without explaining the politics of aid, international trade or monopoly economics. (Kathy Myers)

■ Ski Sunday 5.25-6.00 BBC2 Live coverage of the Men's Downhill over the spectacular 'Camel's Humps' in the Italian Alps.

■ The Money Programme 6.30-7.15 BBC2 Package holiday pitfalls start pre-Xmas this year, plus airline pilots training simulators, the latest British export boom.

■ Sports Review of 1984. 7.15-8.50 BBC1 The annual Sports Personality Awards introduced by Desmond Lynam, and featuring highlights from the year, from the Olympics to Cricket.

■ Tenko 8.50-9.45 BBC1 Last in the series of the BBC's ratings topper.

■ Did You See? Marshall McLuhan 8.45-9.30 BBC2 Tom Wolfe's profile of the electronic guru with Norman Mailer, Pierre Trudeau and Jonathan Miller in the studio.

■ People to People: City General 9.15-9.45 TV History Workshop to C4.

Last year this production company went to Cowley car works to re-create the history of men and women on the shop floor through a montage of interviews, old photos and reminiscences. Much the same format is applied in this programme to Stoke City General Hospital, and although much worthy and fascinating material is unearthed in the process, the actual programme format remains stultifyingly dull. Access programming has made an important contribution to TV, but in this slot at least, its mode of address could do with a spring clean. (Kathy Myers)

■ A Kind of Alaska by Harold Pinter 9.45-10.55 Central to LWT

'Alaska' was inspired by Pinter's reading of 'Awakenings', a documentary account of the traumatic re-awakening of victims of a 1916 world wide sleeping sickness. In this TV version Dorothy Tutin plays Deborah a middle aged woman erupting into consciousness after 29 years. The stark hospitalised set and jerky autistic acting style convey the agony of her existence suspended between 'heaven and hell' as the doctor (Paul Scofield) and sister (Susan Engel) try to shape her destroyed reality. Heavy going would be an understatement and Pinter's fascination with alienation could be spiced up if the production weren't so heavily dependent on the 'Freudian couch' approach to women's hysteria. Tutin works hard at the part, but her performance is hampered by the lack of conviction which her 'teenage' flash-backs convey. Produced by Lyn Horstford and directed by Kenneth Ive. (Kathy Myers)

■ Everyman: Render Unto Caesar 10.50-11.30 BBC1 Modern Christian writers discuss the anti-church conspiracy laws passed by the Nazis fifty years ago this week, in provocative film documentary.

MONDAY

■ Backstairs at the White House 3.50-5.50 BBC2 First of four part mega-drama which spills over the next four afternoons, this is not so much behind closed doors as through the keyhole. Based on ex-

presidential maid Lillian Rogers' memoirs, who worked below stairs with her daughter for 52 years, the series spans the domestic crises of the Big Chiefs from Woodrow Wilson to Eisenhower. World history provides the backdrop. Starry cast includes Robert Vaughn, Claire Bloom, George Kennedy, Leslie Uggams and Cloris Leachman. No doubt someone saw Gerald Ford in Dynasty and thought 'now wouldn't that make a great mini-series. ...'

■ The First Noels 7.20-7.35 BBC2 See Wednesday.

■ Panorama 8.10-9.00 BBC1

■ World In Action 8.30-9.00 Granada to C4

■ Yes Minister Party Games 8.30-9.00 BBC2

Rumours of a cabinet reshuffle mar the Xmas festivities. ■ Kabul Autumn: The Other Side of the Afghan War 9.00-10.00 Imagecast to C4 Underneath the cold war rhetoric, Tim Hodlin and Norman Fenton's film documentary about Afghanistan reveals a web of more complex Third World issues: the lowest life expectancy and the highest illiteracy in Asia, a government trying to make social reforms taken for granted in the West and committed to a free market economy whilst supported by the Soviets. Uncensored, the film is a stark contrast to the media's simplistic 'Russian Vietnam' coverage, portraying the rebel 'Mujaheddin' not only as counter-revolutionaries, but as out-and-out bandits waging a Holy War against the twentieth century. The makers have a habit of being in the right place at the right time (being the first to cover the hostage crisis at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran) and occasionally the wrong place (Fenton's film crew being kidnapped by the Argentinians during the Falklands.) Worth catching. (Andy Lipman)

■ Eleventh Hour. Bright Eyes 11.00-12.30 Caught in the Acts Prods to C4.

No rehash, this, of liberal apologies for gay life like Denis Lemon's recent 'Diverse Reports', but something far more innovative and ambitious. An attempt to place the current threats to the gay community, censorship, entrapment and scapegoating in the media's representation of AIDS, in an historical context. The 'Horizon'-style documentaries, concentrating on the medical issues, ignore the historical development of both medical attitudes, and of the homosexual rights movement. Whilst conventional TV formats reinforce the marginal minority status of gays. Such are the roots which revitalise stereotypes and fan moral panics. By avoiding predictable links and simple arguments, the programme clearly expects much of its audience, leaving it open to the charge that few who actually read the sensational tabloids will stay with it for long. And perhaps it suffers from the gay programme-maker's dilemma of cramming too much into too little time.

Still, it's thought-provoking, inventive and a valuable plea for greater community-consciousness amongst gays. And we don't get the chance to assert our own history very often. (Andy Lipman)

TUESDAY

■ Backstairs at the White House 3.50-5.20 BBC2 Coolidge to Hoover, See Monday.

■ Star Trek 5.10-6.00 BBC1 Captain slogs on to the City at the Edge of Forever.

■ Open To Question 5.20-6.00 BBC2

Billy Connolly answers questions from a studio full of 'little yins'.

■ The Avengers. The Murder Market 6.00-7.00 C4. Sinister goings-on in marriage bureau.

■ Whistle Test 7.30-8.30 BBC2

Andy Kershaw interviews the Thompson Twins in Paris. John Peel interviews himself in Media Vale, David Hepworth interviews Lou Reed in the studio. Music in the breaks. ■ Cagney and Lacey 8.10-9.00 BBC1

■ Taking the Lid Off 9.00-10.00 Central to Thames.

Nigel Evans producer of 'Silent Minority', 'Walter' and the excellent 'Skin Horse' fires a broadside at social concern programming with the traumatically brilliant 'Taking The Lid Off': an exploration of the needs, frustrations and experiences of children physically, emotionally and sexually battered by their families. But this is no cutesy romp through 'innocence destroyed'. Evans only has two messages: The nuclear family is fucked and kids have the same rights as pets — none. His commitment to the rights of kids is reinforced by the decision to involve them at all stages of programme making — from script development through to the final edit. A positive and invigorating film which successfully walks the tight rope between gut grabbing excess and the chaos of a tear jerker. Staggering. Make sure the children watch. (Kathy Myers)

WEDNESDAY

■ Backstairs at the White House 3.55-5.25 BBC2

Part three of this mini series looks at Roosevelt's New Deal see Mon for comment.

■ The Box of Delights by John Mansfield 4.55-5.30 BBC1

■ The Mary Tyler Moore Show. Thoroughly unimpaired Mary. 6.50-7.15 BBC2.

■ The First Noels 7.15-7.30 BBC2

Everything you ever wanted to know about Christmas Carols. 'Pagan Roots' begins this series of short programmes, introduced by Puck incarnate, Sir Geraint Evans, which lead inexorably to Christmas Day itself. Unfortunately, the realisation of this good and simple idea is ponderous and dull. Thus, although Sir G impishly tells the story of 'The Holly and the Ivy', which turns out to be naughty and all about sex, it is snug with many facial contortions, carefully rolled 'r's and grrreat seriousness by a proper choir — visually as exciting as watching a choir could ever be — not very. (Diana Simmonds)

■ Ebony 7.30-8.10 BBC2

Special reports include a look at the 1981 Nationality Act and the experience of black people who came over to Britain in the '50s and '60s.

■ Dallas: The Homecoming 8.00-8.45 BBC1

■ Hetty King Performer 8.00-8.30 C4.

Repeat profile of Hetty, now in her 80s and one of the first Vaudeville and musical halls male impersonators earlier this century: Still cogent and amusing, she continues to perform today.

■ Arts Review Of The Year 9.00-11.05 C4

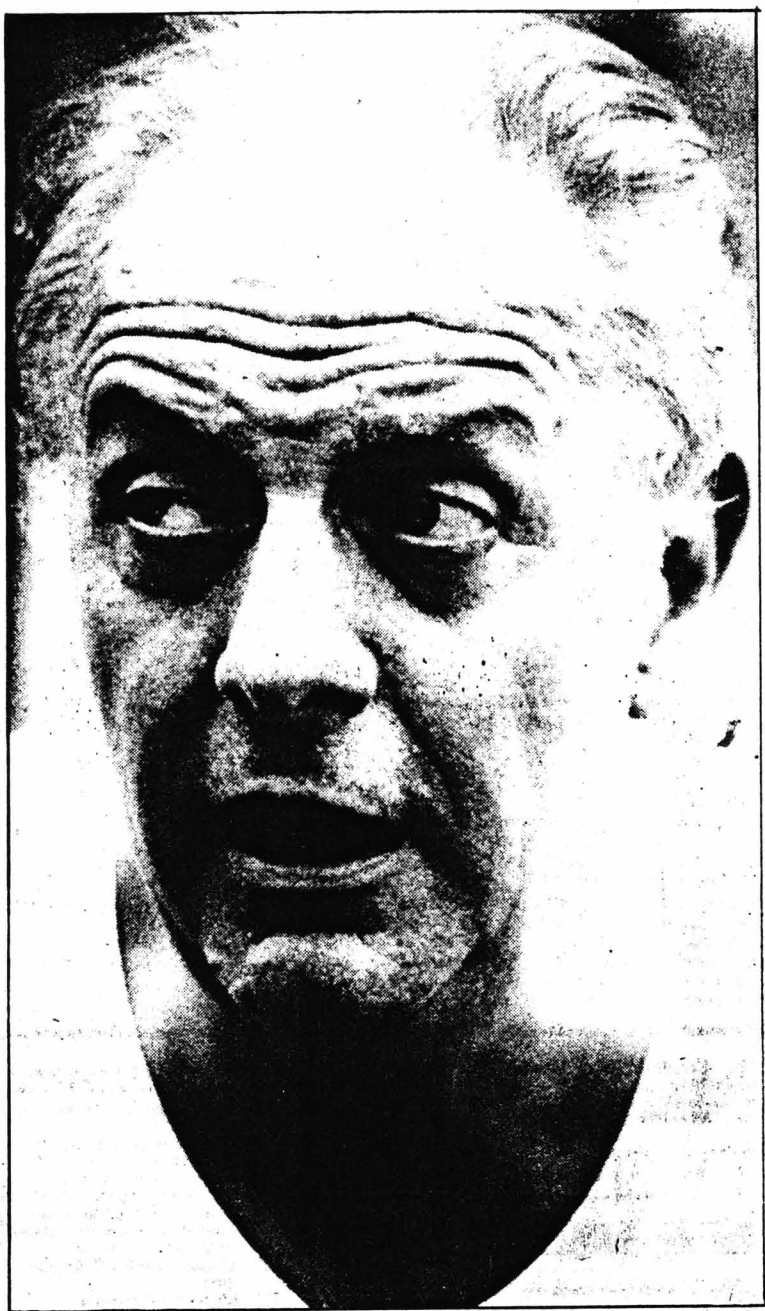
Melvyn Bragg of LWT's 'The South Bank Show' introduces this long list of current cultural hits to celebrate the end of 1984. Guests and performers include the excellent Phoenix Dance Company, Tariq Ali (doing what?), Salman Rushdie, Billy Bragg, Dame Peggy Ashcroft and Karl Livingstone.

■ Black on Black: Ethiopia Special 11.05-12.00 LWT to C4 The programme's new team returns from Ethiopia with an update to the minute report of the food crisis which has spread from Ethiopia into the entire Sahel region.

■ Late Night In Concert: The

■ Ian Breakwell's Christmas Diary 12.00-12.05 Analogue Productions to C4.

'The grisly bloody Christmas reality of the city covered in vomit' is just one of the seasonal



Dario Fo, the man behind 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist' is profiled in ARENA (Fri BBC2)

tableaux presented through Ian Breakwell's 'Christmas Diary', eight nightly sorties into C4's Xmas programming, the first this Wednesday.

The fact that Christmas viewing figures tend to drop indicates that the major companies' no-escape programming drives viewers away. And so, following the favourable response to last summer's transmission of some two dozen programmes derived from Ian Breakwell's 'Continuous Diary', 'Christmas Diary' caters for that large minority (majority?) for whom Christmas is a grotesque parody.

Each programme takes familiar images — the turkey, the office party, the Circus, the Queen's speech — and refracts it through Breakwell's surrealist humour, his penchant for finding the marvelous and the profane in the everyday. The series builds to an attempt to recapture a genuinely festive occasion through its celebration of the 'Monarchs of Misrule' — 'Screamers' Jay Hawkins to Tommy Cooper. But what is most gratifying about the series is that so much tv-time has been given to a practising artist. Thanks for this are due to Breakwell's producer, Anna

Ridley, whose Analogue Productions is in the process of making C4 programmes with a number of artists, including David Cunningham, Rose Garrard, Rosemary Butcher. (Nick Kimberley)'

THURSDAY

■ The British At War 2.30-4.30 C4

More blasts from WW2's media machine with Humphrey Jennings' 'Fires Were Started' (See TV Film) and 'The True Story of Lill Marlene' plus 'Cameramen At War'.

■ Backstairs at the White House 3.55-5.30 BBC2

More life in the servant's quarters in this USA import mini series which watches the Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower administrations pass by. See Monday.

■ Top Of The Pops 7.25-8.00 BBC1

■ Open Space: Blues and Beyond 7.25-8.00 BBC2

Second of two programmes celebrating black music through blues, reggae and griot. Sounds from Foday Musa Suso, Eddie C Campbell Blues Band, Gail Peters, Dennis Bovell and the Dub Band. Recommended.

■ The Road To Itang 8.00-8.30 Oxford Ethnographic Films to C4 Unfortunately unavailable for

preview, this look at Ethiopian villagers' attempt to cope with poverty and famine is narrated by Terence Stamp.

■ Zoo 2000 8.30-9.00 BBC1

A series of great initial promise (how many of us are likely to visit those zoos, let alone the wild habitats) has degenerated into unintentional comedy and a series of statements from Jeremy Cherfas which cry out for a smart rap over the knuckles. For instance it is apparently a great natural experience to watch, with the aid of powerful spotlights and shovels, a turtle laying its eggs; all the while stroking the turtle's head in order to get the feel of things. Nature is reduced to a top ten of spurious sensations. Then Cherfas finally gets to the point: 'I sincerely believe that good zoos are better than bad zoos'. Heavens, surely not. (Diana Simmonds)

■ Crimewatch 9.25-10.05 BBC1

Risible DIY crime series which lets you at home play cops and robbers, support big brother and net the cash rewards.

■ TV Eye 9.30-10.00 Thames

Thames' answer to 'World In Action's investigative journalism. ■ Soap 12.00-12.25 C4

■ Ian Breakwell's Christmas Diary 12.25-12.30 C4 See Wednesday.