

tv previews JACKIE CHOWNS

Message Stick: Scotty Martin - The Songman

ABC, 6pm

Three stories from the indigenous world come together here to create a message of hope. Scotty Martin is an Aboriginal elder who lives in the remote and beautiful Kimberley region. He talks about how the songs he composes are given to him by his ancestors in his dreams.

In Queensland, a four-year-old boy who shows promise as a rodeo rider demonstrates his skill and parades his white Shetland pony, Toughie.

Later, a woman tells us in poetic form about her journey out of "the pit": from depressed and resentful stolen-generation child to a forgiving adult who has understanding and is empowered.

Talking Heads

ABC, 6.30pm

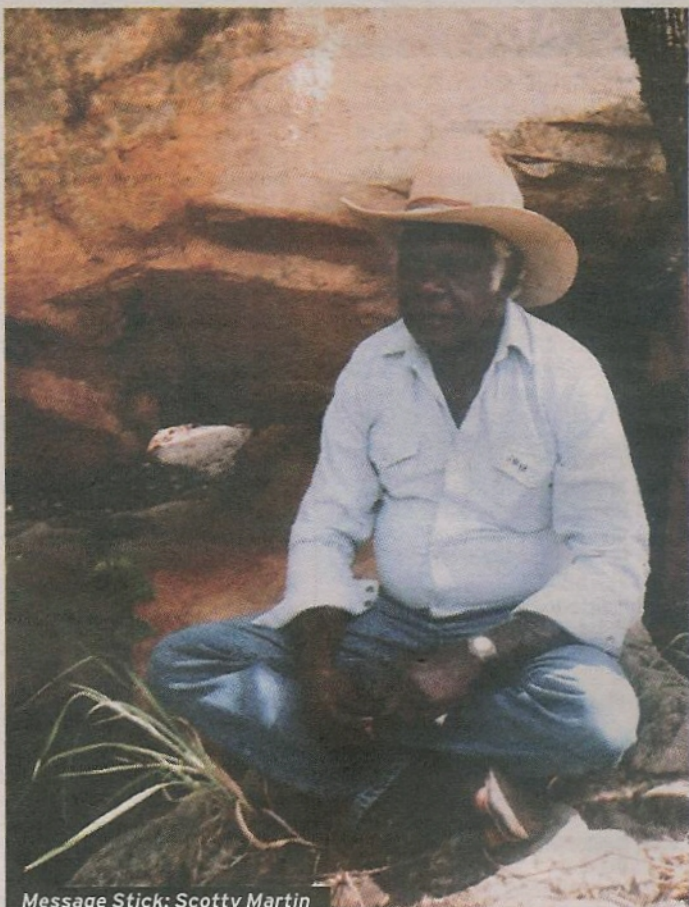
There's little doubt that Jimmy Little's comeback album *Messenger*, produced with a sprinkling of genius by Brendan Gallagher, is already a modern classic. So fans are probably ready to hear more about the treacle-voiced one's early days in the music scene as a country and western singer in the 1950s (even if he does have a penchant for the bland Christian aphorism).

It's just unfortunate that the format of this talk show isn't more conducive to Little's gentle manner as he discusses the effects of his mother's early death, his Aboriginality and his recent kidney transplant. Peter Thompson's inquisitive style comes across as abrasive, and the brash lighting and set design don't help. They make everything seem uncomfortable, especially when Little eventually sings.

Wire in the Blood

ABC, 8.30pm

It's all about meaning: how we get it, whether there is any and how we make sense of it all. In tonight's final episode of this thriller, Tony Hill gets whacked on the head by a



Message Stick: Scotty Martin

criminal and, in subsequent scans, discovers he has a brain tumour.

The deterioration in his condition and the concern for his wellbeing is paralleled by the plot-line involving a sniper who appears to be randomly picking off victims in the street. The lack of any connection between each attack leads Hill to ruminate on the nature of meaning and on our desperate need to create connection between random events when there is none.

Soon his behaviour becomes erratic, yet he refuses treatment, leading everyone to despair, not only over his health, but over his reliability in solving the crime.

World Weddings

SBS, 7.30pm

The men in this program break just about every feminist rule in the book. They sell their 14-year-old

daughters into marriage, treat their wives like slaves, value virginity over just about anything else and discuss the wedding-night consummation as though they were sports commentators.

Still, Romania's gypsies are a colourful lot and child brides are a centuries-old custom. While that doesn't make these Neanderthals' behaviour OK, this documentary is as interesting as the proverbial car wreck - down to the bloody remains.

Tonight's episode of this four-part series isn't really about a wedding, it's about the evidence of the bride's virginity, which comes in the form of blood left on a white night shirt after penetration. If all this sounds like too much information, stay away. The recorded conversations are amazingly intrusive, stopping just short of being in the room with the happy couple.