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The Women of CTV's ETALK

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SISTERS, FUN, SUPPORTIVE, MAGIC FOUR WORDS CHOSEN BY THE WOMEN OF CTV'S ETALK TO DESCRIBE THEIR RELATIONSHIP. WHAT'S INDESCRIBABLE IS AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING PRESENCE EACH SHARE BOTH ON-SCREEN AND OFF.

Anchor Tanya Kim and reporters Lainey Lui, Traci Melchor and Danielle McGimsie sing Spice Girl favourites "Stop" and "Wannabe" as cameras flash and laughter ensues during their Chloe photoshoot. This is not the daily setting for the friendly colleagues, but rather that of whom they cover on Canada's number one entertainment show, which entered its eleventh season in September.

"ETALK is distinctly Canadian with an international gloss," Melchor says, clad in a purple sequin gown and towering suede stilettos. "You're not going to get the same show everyday when you tune in. We're gonna surprise you."

The show covers film festival premieres to the biggest Hollywood scandals and everything in between. Danielle McGimsie, former host of YTV's *The Hit List*, recalls when the show aired only once a week. Now, ETALK is a daily source for entertainment news in homes across Canada. With an average audience of close to 600,000 viewers on CTV, nearly one in five English Canadians (5.6 million) tune in at least once a week.

When a story breaks, the ETALK team drops everything to immediately rewrite, film and edit a show to get it on the air.

"I don't think people realize how much work is required for half an hour of television," McGimsie says.

Gossip queen, Lainey Lui, knows all about that. Sitting with rollers in her hair, typing away, she works diligently to meet a deadline for her blog, laineygossip.com. She believes humans are drawn to gossip because it is a way to "communicate boundaries and acceptances" in a safe environment.

"It was the first show to recognize the value of gossip before blogging became ubiquitous," Lui says of being recruited by ETALK through her revered website.

But ETALK is more than an outlet for details on the collapse of Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson. Melchor regards TIFF, the Toronto International Film Festival, as their "superbowl" arena, with a second spot on the red

carpet at the Oscars. However, among the anticipation of watching an actor exit a limo, the red carpet can bring its challenges.

"I remember one year, reaching out to Brad Pitt over the velvet rope to get his attention," says Tanya Kim. "If it's a scrum situation, you just have to shove your mic in and keep asking questions."

For Kim, this striking determination stems from years of hard work in the industry after graduating from the Ryerson School of Journalism. She immediately began as a production intern at MuchMusic's *The New Music*, working with the esteemed Sook Yin Lee and Avi Lewis. Later, she became a researcher for VJs and a segment producer for the channel's show, *Gonna Meet A Rockstar*. A Jill-of-all-trades, Kim also had a stint as a videographer for Rapid-FAX, which evolved into MuchNews.

Melchor had her share of music journalism working for sister channel, MuchMoreMusic. From traveling to New York and LA, chatting with Madonna at the Essex House Hotel and interviewing a raw Motley Crue in a North Hollywood studio in 2006, the biz has kept her on her toes. She's even interviewed one of her greatest influences, Marilyn Denis of CTV's *The Marilyn Denis Show*, an experience that made her "unnerved" and excited.

Interviewing celebrities on the red carpet and beyond is an anthropological analysis of human beings and "one of the best insights to fame behaviour," Lui explains. McGimsie adds that being "in the moment" is vital when reporting great anecdotes.

Tanya - Dress, Ines Di Santo; jewelry, Mindham Fine Jewellery
Danielle - Dress, Ines Di Santo; jewelry, Birks; ring, Mindham Fine Jewellery
Traci - Dress, BCBG Max Azria; jewelry, Kara Ross; shoes, Zanolli Design available at
Lainey - Dress, Ines Di Santo; bracelet, Mindham Fine Jewellery

Tanya Kim - Dress, Twenty Chury; earrings, Rita Tesolin; ring, Birks; shoes, Zanolli Design available at

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Being present each day is not only what the women of ETALK aim for in their own lives, but for those in need. A Vancouver resident, Lui is also a campaign consultant at the city's Covenant House chapter. A former social worker, she strives to change society's perspective on homeless youth.

"I wish people who feel sorry for every celebrity that messed up, begging for sympathy, would place 10 per cent of that energy towards these kids," she states with vigor. "People who think they can just get a job are obtuse, because, how are you going to go to a job interview when you don't have clothes and a home to shower?"

Hosting a slew of sold out gossip parties across the country; the blogger is currently preparing an event with Covenant House in downtown Vancouver. On November 15, Lui will participate in the organization's Solidarity Sleep Out, where local celebrities and businesspeople will spend one night on the streets and chronicle their experiences.

Last year, Melchor and McGimsie hosted the 14th annual Butterfly Ball, supporting Boost Child Abuse Prevention & Intervention. Melchor was named one of National Post's Worthy 30 for her contribution to the television industry and continues to support the community in a wide range of ways, from her involvement with the Sickie Cell Awareness Group of Ontario to walking in the closing night show, Dare To Wear Love, in support of The Steven Lewis Foundation.

In 2007, Kim became an ambassador for CARE Canada, a non-profit organization helping the poor and providing relief to victims of disaster and disease in developing countries. She traveled to Zambia, where she launched the "I Am Powerful" initiative. The mission of the campaign is to provide women and girls educational programs and tools to help them become their own individuals and provide for themselves, their families and communities.

As Kim reflects on her role as an ambassador, she believes that "women need to stand by each other more," especially in the competitive entertainment industry. Her co-host Ben Mulroney may be her "big brother" on set, but only three women would understand her excitement in wearing a glitzy black gown.

"Our viewers can feel what we're projecting," Kim says. "ETALK has a roster of women who genuinely like each other, support one another and go out for drinks together."

As the four friends pose in a studio, gaze into camera lenses and talk into microphones, the experience is not so foreign. When asked to describe the relationship between the four women, Kim asks, "Just one word?" feeling limited in expressing the ETALK bond. Instead, like the elements of the cover shoot, she finds ease in a phrase of three: "thick as thieves."

ETALK is Canada's #1 entertainment show, which airs Weekdays at 7 p.m. ET on CTV. For more information visit www.CTV.ca or follow ETALK on Twitter @etalkCTV.