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IT'S not that *Gabereau Live!* is bad. Far from it. There have been a number of enjoyable moments on Baton's new morning talk show that wooed Ms. Vicki from her CBC radio niche. How about when singer Sarah McLachlan got her dog Rex to roll over on command? That brought a hearty round of applause from the dozens of bystanders congregated in the clattering halls of the new Vancouver Television station.

Or what about the chatter of hyperconfident ex-PM Kim Campbell, who refused to play her cello as advertised but still found time to tell us that she'd lost 40 pounds and was making it her mission to encourage women to be uppity.

Oh, yes, and there was also a droll paleontologist who has written a book about making model dinosaurs out of chicken bones, and actually boned a chicken during the show, though not actually on the air.

Yes, it's been fun watching the diva Gabereau taking morning television's initiation tests. Fun, when it



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hasn't been painful. Radio, she must be realizing in retrospect, is a much more casual, throwaway medium. You fluff something, you charm your way out of it, you move on. Television is much less forgiving.

After watching the first two mornings of *Gabereau Live!* (which goes live at 8 a.m. Vancouver time, when exclamation marks must be hard to come by), it's hard not to feel sorry for Gabereau. Her radio career made it clear that she is a talented gabber, a warm and sincere (though rarely saccharine) interviewer, one with a

gift for the quick asides that may not lead anywhere in particular, but are delightful as far as they go. This talented woman's transition to talk-TV couldn't be expected to be effortless, but should have been made a lot easier for her than this.

If Baton executives are using Gabereau and her Vancouver TV base as a way to strengthen their coast-to-coast network empire, why has she been squeezed into a show that looks so makeshift? With all the talent and resources that Baton could call upon, why does *Gabereau Live!* feel like something that was whipped together over the weekend?

By comparison, all those empty-headed American morning shows that Gabereau fans might be expected to despise are triumphs of professionalism. At least on *Regis & Kathie Lee* the walls of fire engines don't drown out an interview. Nor are there clangs of construction equipment being dropped on the floor, or quite so many blown cues — VTV is a work in progress.

Perhaps to ease her move from radio, Gabereau is not working directly with a studio audience, though there do seem to be a few people milling near the open-ended studio, who look like they don't quite know what to do. That is sometimes the look that comes over Gabereau's eyes as well, which is not surprising given what she has to work with. The low point in the first two days was probably the failure to appear of Hawaiian sumo wrestler Akebono. This meant that Gabereau was forced to mark time with the promoter of a Canadian sumo contest who was reluctant to say much apart from contradicting the host when she insisted she'd once seen a sumo match in Canada.

He shouldn't have been on the show at all. And for all the buzz that had Joni Mitchell appearing with her long-lost daughter Kilauren, what did we get but a rambling gush-in taped last week (so much for *Live!*) at 3 in the morning with all three parties to this infatuated idiocy

wearing sunglasses.

There is no clear direction for Gabereau's show so far, and the host has to share some of the blame. Sure, she is lumbered with too many shrinking-violet Canadian interviewees who are too meek to say anything arresting. But Gabereau's strength lies in herself, and there is not enough of her in her show. She should be interrupting more, mocking where necessary, taking the conversation wherever her free-ranging mind feels like roaming. Turn to Rosie O'Donnell if you want to see how it's done. But our Vicki seems too busy checking her notes as the guests prattle on, too ready to mock her full-figured appearance (engaging on radio, sad on TV) and incapable of asking the questions that will draw out provocative answers. The **Joni Mitchell** "interview," for example, had nothing to do with the long-lost daughter, who barely spoke. Instead Vicki and Joni giggled girlishly about cats' names, playing pool and using the word "eh." Huh!