

Counterclaimant Michelle Phan ("Phan"), as and for her counterclaims against Ultra International Music Publishing, LLC and Ultra Records, LLC (collectively "Ultra"), alleges as follows:

### **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

- 1. The Court has jurisdiction over this Counterclaim pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367(a).
- 2. Venue is proper in this judicial district pursuant to principles of ancillary venue.

#### THE PARTIES

- 3. Phan is an individual residing in Los Angeles, California.
- 4. Phan is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that Counterdefendant Ultra International Music Publishing, LLC is a New York limited liability company with its principal place of business in New York, New York.
- 5. Phan is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that Counterdefendant Ultra Records, LLC is a Delaware limited liability company with its principal place of business in New York, New York.
- 6. Phan is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that at all times relevant hereto and in doing all that is alleged herein, each Counterdefendant was an agent or employee of the other Counterdefendants, acting within the scope of such agency or employment, directing, ratifying, or condoning the acts or omissions of these Counterdefendants alleged herein, and with the knowledge of each Counterdefendant attributable to the other Counterdefendant.

## **GENERAL ALLEGATIONS**

7. Phan is a beauty and lifestyle celebrity and entrepreneur with a global audience. She has approximately seven million subscribers to her YouTube channel,



 placing her in the top 1% globally on this social media platform. Phan receives income from YouTube derived from, among other things, advertisements that appear in association with her videos.

- 8. Phan's YouTube videos feature demonstrations of make-up techniques and other beauty and lifestyle tips. Her videos typically incorporate a broad range of music in the background for texture only; the music is never the focus of the video.
- 9. Phan's videos are so popular, and her fan base is so dedicated, that she has been able to build a significant business through advertisements that appear in and around her videos, and through large-scale partnerships with major media companies and brand advertisers.
- 10. For example, Phan has a contract with Endemol Beyond, a wholly-owned division of Endemol North America, part of the second largest independent television company in the world. Phan also has a contract with L'Oreal Cosmetics, one of the world's largest cosmetics manufacturers. These partnerships and others represent significant monetary commitments from Phan's partners and significant revenue to Phan. They rely on Phan's ability to reach millions of potential consumers through her active YouTube channel, and depend upon Phan's YouTube channel remaining active and unencumbered.
- 11. Due to the popularity of Phan's videos, record labels have paid Phan to use their artists' music as background in her YouTube videos and to include in the video a link to the iTunes store (which allows consumers to purchase the artist's music immediately). Incorporating this iTunes link drives significant awareness of the artist's music, and significant traffic to the iTunes store. Additionally, because rankings on the influential Billboard charts are based, in part, on data from YouTube (in addition to other sources), the significant viewership of Phan's videos helps record labels in their efforts to see their music rise up in the charts.

- 12. Phan is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that, like other record labels, Ultra too wanted Phan to use the music of artists on its label as background music in her YouTube videos along with an iTunes link.
- 13. Beginning in July of 2009, Phan contacted Jason Kilgore, Ultra's Senior New Media Manager, and asked him for permission to use the music of Kaskade, one of Ultra's artists, in her YouTube videos. In her electronic communication to Kilgore, Phan pointed out that she has several videos with more than 1,000,000 views (and some with over 2,000,000 views) and offered, in consideration for the right to use Kaskade's music in her videos, to credit the musician and include an iTunes purchase link in the video to make it easier for her subscribers to purchase Ultra's music.
- 14. Kilgore wrote in response that he was aware of Phan, that Ultra was "really happy to see you supporting Kaskade," and that Ultra was "more than happy to let [Phan] use this content."
- 15. Phan and Kilgore then began to discuss in writing how this agreement would work in connection with YouTube's "Content ID System." The way YouTube's Content ID System worked was as follows: Owners of copyrighted content (including record companies) would enter into an agreement with YouTube to use its Content ID System. Phan is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that Ultra entered into such a contract. The owner of the content would then input all of its copyrighted material (in Ultra's case, songs) into YouTube's Content ID System, which would then search YouTube for matching content. Every time the Content ID System identified a video containing content that matched the copyrighted material uploaded by a content owner, YouTube would put a "claim" on the YouTube video that contained matching content.
- 16. In 2009, content owners had varying arrangements with YouTube regarding their recourse when the Content ID System triggered a claim based on a video containing copyrighted material uploaded by the owner. For some owners, whenever the Content ID System triggered a claim, they would automatically receive a



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specified share of any advertising revenue generated by the "claimed" video. Phan is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that Ultra had such an arrangement with YouTube.

- 17. As further confirmation that Ultra agreed to allow Phan to use its music (in consideration for her crediting the musician and including an iTunes purchase link), Kilgore promised Phan in writing that whenever YouTube made a claim on one of Phan's videos using a Kaskade song controlled by Ultra, he would release that claim.
- 18. Kilgore then offered to send, and did send, to Phan a promotional package of Ultra CDs featuring Kaskade and other artists. He said he was sending the CDs "to show [Ultra's] thanks" for Phan using Kaskade's music in her YouTube videos. Kilgore went on to say in an electronic communication sent a few days later that if there was *any other* music by Ultra artists that Phan liked, she should just let him know and he would send it to her.
- 19. Only a few days later, Kilgore again thanked Phan for using another of Kaskade's songs in one of her YouTube videos and further stated:

  especially thanks for including the iTunes buy link in the

description and a title bar at the beginning. This is the perfect way to incorporate any of our videos.

(Emphasis added.)

20. In August 2009, Phan and Kilgore further communicated regarding Phan's use of music by Ultra artists (including but not limited to Kaskade) in her YouTube videos. Part of this came in the context of Phan asking Kilgore to release "claims" made by YouTube on behalf of Ultra in connection with Phan's use of music



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