Variety's 2022 Legal Impact Report Recognizes Five Katten Entertainment Partners

April 21, 2022

Five Los Angeles-based partners in Katten's Entertainment and Media practice were featured in *Variety's* prestigious Legal Impact Report, which is an annual list that profiles leading litigation, transactional and in-house attorneys in the entertainment and media industries. *Variety's* 2022 list recognized the litigation trio of Zia Modabber, David Halberstadter and Joel Weiner, and the transactional duo of Michael Hobel and Melanie Tomanov. Members of this group have consistently appeared in the Legal Impact Report over the past decade.

In *Variety's* profile of the litigation team, Zia was recognized for his representation of some of the world's biggest musical artists. It noted that Zia, who is also managing partner of Katten's Los Angeles offices and chair of the Entertainment and Media Litigation practice, focuses on assisting clients in controlling the rights to their work.

"There's been a massive increase in the amount of unlicensed music being used on social media platforms that needs to be addressed and stabilized," Zia told *Variety*. "People still aren't clear that music isn't free, particularly when songs are incorporated into social-media marketing campaigns."

David, who is also Katten's deputy general counsel, was featured for his work with some of the most prominent names in the entertainment industry. *Variety* named him as a "go-to-lawyer" for intellectual property disputes involving major production companies, film and television studios, and streaming services.

Highlighting Joel's working relationship with several leading players in the entertainment business, including some of the largest media and entertainment companies, *Variety* featured his broad range of work. Joel was recognized for handling disputes arising from copyright, contract, accounting and business tort claims, as well as personal disputes involving directors, entertainers and professional athletes.

In its profile of the transactions team, *Variety* featured Michael for his representation of major media and entertainment companies in groundbreaking deals across the digital, film and television sectors. Michael, who is also chair of the Entertainment and Media Transactions practice, was also recognized for counseling clients on a wide array of matters, including labor issues, intellectual property rights and assets, and talent and output arrangements.

Noting the growing prevalence of the streaming sector, Michael told *Variety* that development and production activity is continually increasing as streaming services demand high-quality programming. "Deal structures are constantly evolving as new business models and technology are introduced," he said.

Spotlighting Melanie's wide-ranging experience, *Variety* highlighted her diverse practice that includes work on behalf of some of the leading names in animation. Melanie was recognized for her representation of several players in the media and entertainment industry, including writers, directors, producers, motion picture and television studios, distribution and production companies, animation studios, video game companies and tech firms.

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