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# ninth circuit rules in favor of led zeppelin, clarifies standards for copyright infringement

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On March 9, 2020, the Ninth Circuit issued its en banc decision in the long-running and closely watched copyright case concerning the rock group Led Zeppelin's 1971 song "Stairway to Heaven." *Skidmore v. Led Zeppelin et al.*, Case No. 16-56057, 16-56287 (9th Cir. Mar. 9, 2020). A 2014 lawsuit in the Central District of California alleged that "Stairway to Heaven" infringed portions of an instrumental composition titled "Taurus" that had been recorded and released in 1967 by the group Spirit. Capping off several years of uncertainty, the Court's en banc opinion reversed the previous 2018 ruling of a three-judge panel and reinstated the judgment entered at the district court, where a jury found that "Stairway to Heaven" does not infringe the "Taurus" musical composition.

Among many topics covered, the Ninth Circuit's en banc opinion contains three sets of holdings that, absent a successful petition to the U.S. Supreme Court, should have continuing implications for copyright litigation in the Ninth Circuit. These holdings may be summarized as follows...

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