



Gabriella Nourafchan Ismaj

Partner



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legal expertise

Gabriella's practice focuses on Entertainment and Intellectual Property Litigation, representing many leading businesses and individuals in the music, film, fashion, hospitality and television industries, as well as emerging and established technology businesses. Gabriella has significant experience litigating in both state and federal courts across the country, including multiple federal copyright infringement trials, with a concentration on copyright, trademark, and contract and commercial disputes.

representative matters

- Represents record labels, music publishers, songwriters, producers, managers and artists in a variety of music industry disputes, including copyright and trademark/trade dress infringement, breach of contract, tortious interference, right of publicity, defamation and employment-related claims.
- Member of trial team representing artists, producers, and various record labels and studios that obtained judgment as a matter of law on behalf of all Defendants at the close of evidence, and dismissed Plaintiff's copyright infringement claim, which was affirmed by the Ninth Circuit on appeal.
- Member of defense team representing songwriters, publishers, and record labels in recent copyright infringement trial in the Ninth Circuit, which obtained judgment as a matter of law on behalf of all Defendants following jury verdict in favor of Plaintiffs, which was affirmed by the Ninth Circuit on appeal.
- Member of trial team representing two songwriters/producers against putative songwriter who brought claims of joint ownership in sound recording and musical composition of hit song, which resulted in favorable settlement for client in which it was resolved that the third

practice areas

litigation
commercial litigation
intellectual property
entertainment & ip
litigation

admissions

California, 2014
U.S. District Court
Central District of California,
2014
Northern District of
California, 2019
Southern District of
California, 2021
U.S. Court of Appeals
Ninth Circuit, 2014

education

University of California Los
Angeles School of Law, J.D.,
2014
University of Pennsylvania,
B.A., Communications, 2011;
magna cum laude, Dean's
List (2008 & 2010)

languages

- Farsi
- Spanish
- Italian

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party was not an author or copyright owners of any material in the work at issue.

- Member of litigation team in decades long defamation case for music producer, resulting in may key rulings in his favor and favorable settlement for client shortly before trial.
- Represented music administrator in high-profile copyright infringement case against an online content provider for unauthorized use of lyrics on online platform.
- Represented songwriters and record label in copyright infringement case against clothing brand for unauthorized use of musical work in marketing campaign.
- Obtained dismissal of copyright infringement action for music industry defendants at pleadings stage based on insufficient allegations of access and substantial similarity.
- Represents clients from film, fashion, hospitality, technology, and television industries, as well as online content providers, in disputes involving copyright and trademark/trade dress infringement, defamation, breach of contract, tortious interference, employment and other business disputes.
 - Represented restaurant in defense against trademark infringement claims, resulting in favorable settlement for client.
 - Lead member of litigation team representing video game publisher in series of lawsuits alleging personal injuries and psychological harms stemming from alleged "addiction" to playing video games, successfully defeating institution of Multi-District Litigation and successfully enforcing arbitration provisions in client's Terms of Service.
 - Lead member of litigation team that represented international client in defense of defamation action, and obtained dismissal of action with prejudice due to lack of personal jurisdiction.
 - Represents online stock photo websites and online publications in connection with copyright infringement cases.
 - Represents individuals and businesses in defamation and right of publicity actions.
 - Represented plaintiff fashion brand against competitor in trade dress infringement action, resulting in favorable settlement for client.

other career experience

- Judicial Extern to the Honorable Margaret M. Morrow, U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
- Legal Intern, Law Offices of Levy & Nourafchan LLP



Gabriella Nourafchan Ismaj

- Member of litigation team that negotiated favorable settlement for international company in breach of contract dispute.

honors & awards

- "Music Legal Elite," *Variety* (2025)
- "The Top 25 Media and Entertainment Attorneys of 2025," *Attorney Intel* (2025)
- "Legal Impact Report: Up Next," *Variety* (2024)
- "Top Music Lawyers," *Billboard* (2023)

headlines

Christine Lepera, David Steinberg, Bradley Mullins, and Gabriella Ismaj Named to *Variety's* 2025 "Music Legal Elite" List

Variety , July 30, 2025

Gabriella Nourafchan Ismaj Named to *Attorney Intel's* "Top 25 Media and Entertainment Attorneys of 2025"

Attorney Intel , May 30, 2025

Four MSK Partners Named to *Variety's* 2024 "Legal Impact Report"

April 17, 2024

7 MSK Attorneys Named to *Billboard's* 2023 "Top Music Lawyers" List

Billboard, April 3, 2023

MSK Promotes Five Lawyers to Partner

Business Wire , December 19, 2022

media mentions

MSK Highlighted in *Law360* for Win in *Gray v. Hudson* Case

Law360, December 16, 2022

Christine Lepera and MSK Team Highlighted in *Billboard* Involving Major Win for Dr. Luke

Billboard, March 11, 2022

Christine Lepera and MSK Team Highlighted in *Law360* for Major Victory Involving 'Dark Horse'

Law360, March 10, 2022

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Gabriella Nourafchan Ismaj

MSK Attorneys Named in *Daily Journal's* Top Verdicts Special Report
February 18, 2016

publications

California Takes a Stab at Origin Regulation: Made in California?
June 11, 2015

client alerts

Epic Games Obtains Early Win In *Fortnite* "Running Man" IP Lawsuit
MSK Client Alert , June 3, 2020

MSK Wins Reversal of "Dark Horse" Copyright Verdict
MSK Client Alert , March 20, 2020

events & speaking engagements

Five Years Out
February 6, 2020

ABA Forum on the Entertainment and Sports Industries' 41st Annual Conference: "Playing the Game"
OCT 11-13, 2019