

Jonathan Gaisman QC is just as happy writing cultural essays as he is lawyering, with his most recent article covering the 'infinite riches' of Mozart's piano concertos.

In his own words, he feels it is hugely important for lawyers to have a "hinterland" by which to escape.

However, an interest in the arts does not stop the **7KBW** barrister (Call 1979) from being from one of the revered silks in the City, as well as a favoured pick for any significant case concerning the Big Four.

His latest accountancy-related matter is that of **Carillion's claim against KPMG**, with Gaisman, who is acting for the accountancy giant, landing the first blow during a pre-action hearing against Carillion's lawyers at Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan which failed in its attempt to secure disclosure.

This was the first formal stage of Carillion's legal battle against KPMG, with Mr Justice Jacobs dismissing Quinn's application and putting an end to what Gaisman described as a legal bout of "shadow boxing".

Since taking silk in 1995, Gaisman has been involved in some of the biggest audit negligence cases to date, including for the defendants in *Barings v Deloitte* and *Equitable Life v Ernst & Young*. In neither case did the claimant make any recovery from the auditor.

It was his involvement in the EY matter that led to the call from **Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe** this time around, taking instruction once again from partner Simon Willis alongside chambers' colleague **James Brocklebank QC**.

In addition to the Carillion dispute, he has also been instructed by Allen & Overy partner Joanna Page for the impending insurance-related **test case brought by the Financial Conduct Authority**, with Gaisman acting for Hiscox.

The nature of these top-level cases demonstrates the calibre of Gaisman's advocacy, however, even with such experience, he still finds it impossible to perform without "absolutely meticulous preparation".

"I prepare for cases in the same way but even more carefully," says Gaisman. "Some people can go into court with modest preparation but I've found it impossible unless I am fully prepared."

This was certainly the case during the Excalibur litigation a number of years ago when Gaisman succeeded on behalf of client Gulf Keystone after cross-examining a witness for 13 days: "It was a sort of agony but great fun," says Gaisman.

"When you stand up you get into the zone. It's almost as if you are in a trance. You think clearly but you have no idea how it happened afterwards."

As for the issue of winning and losing cases, Gaisman is unashamedly philosophical in his response: "Schopenhauer defined pleasure as merely the absence of pain, and similarly, the pleasure of winning is no more than the absence of pain when losing."

One wonders whether his clients can approach cases with the same philosophical outlook.

Data from The Lawyer's Litigation Tracker shows that Gaisman has been involved in five concluded court cases since 2015, taking instruction from the likes of Clyde & Co, Norton Rose Fulbright and Kennedys.

Meanwhile, his list of clients during this period includes Petrosaudi Oil Services, SCF Tankers and Talbot Underwriting.