

**MUEN 581-002 Listening Assignment 1**  
**Due date: in class Friday 30 January**

John Cage (1912 – 1992) came up with the idea of the “prepared piano” in 1938 to try to imitate the sounds of a percussion ensemble in a small performance space with only a piano available to accompany a dance production.

Available at the 4<sup>th</sup> floor reserves desk under MUEN 581:

1. Bunker, Richard. 1981. *The Well-Prepared Piano*. San Pedro: Litoral Arts Press, 1981. ML697 B86: **read pp. 5-18** (Foreword by John Cage and the introductory chapters).
2. John Cage - *Three Dances for Two Prepared Pianos*  
Score: M214 C166 D3: **look at the chart of preparations and the instructions.**
3. Listen online (any McGill computer) to the **first two movements** of the *Three Dances* at <http://www.dramonline.org/albums/john-cage-music-for-two-pianos-double-edge>, Follow with the score if you can.
4. Be prepared to discuss in class:
  - “Preparation” technique: is it “safe?” Is it worth it?
  - What are the changes to the timbre of the instrument?
  - What are the challenges for the performers before they even play?
  - The pieces
  - The performance
  - What do you think playing this music requires from the performers?