

John Weretka

**The Guitar, the Musette and
Meaning in the Paintings of
Watteau**

Watteau's paintings have long been recognised as sites of contested meaning: are they sublime vacuities, illustrating nothing but the polite but empty banter of a doomed class, or are they vehicles for nuanced, often satirical, sometimes misanthropic meditations on love and (un)faithfulness? Musical instruments play an important part in the iconography of Watteau's painting, but their significance as vessels of meaning has not been explored. What can a wider reading of the iconography of musical instruments, their theoretical literature and repertoire tell us about the intended meaning of Watteau's work? This paper will examine the guitar and musette, the contexts in which they appeared, the music and theoretical literature published for them and poetry of the siècle d'or in order to penetrate the enigma of Watteau's world.



**Please RSVP Mark Shephard
(shepm@unimelb.edu.au) if you
plan to join us for dinner in Lygon
st afterwards.**

**Tuesday 29 April 2008 6.45 pm
Room 110 Elisabeth Murdoch Building
All Welcome**