



Rueben Alexander and James Beck who will be performing with the Australian Art Quartet at the Yellow House.

City East

Australian Art Quartet hooked up to electric shock nodes in concert designed to push some buttons

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It's not every day that you would describe classical music as shocking — but that's exactly what the Australian Art Quartet are out to achieve.

The boundary-breaking master musicians will play their next concert hooked up to electric shock pads — surrendering themselves to the whims of others as they hand the controls over the audience.

Designed to explore disruption and removal of choice, *Shocking Cliches* will showcase the work of Dr Michaela Davies, herself a musician, composer and psychologist.



Shocking Cliches explores the relationship between control and free will.

Dr Davies has written the *Cyborg Quartet*, where two of the group will be controlled by electric shocks, dictating the sounds that they produce on their instruments.

The concert is bound to push more buttons than just the controls, member and artistic director of the Australian Art Quartet James Beck said.

"I think the (audience will) find it deeply intriguing," Beck said.

The audience will be able to decide "when we get shocked and who gets shocked," he said.

The piece is based on a personal theory of Dr Davies, who believes that "we don't as humans have free will — we're just going through the motions of our pre-programming," Beck said.



The Australian Art Quartet is made up of Dan Russell, Hayley Bullock, Leo Kram and James Beck.

The disruption of this means that the watchers become the enactors of the performance, deciding when to sabotage or interject their own desires into the music.

"As musicians we're very sensitive to our own sense of control," Beck said.

Subversive, thrilling and off-the-wall, *Shocking Cliches* asks the audience to "vandalise" pillars of the Western musical canon, including *Pachelbel Canon*, the music brides walk down the aisle to.

This isn't the quartet's first foray into the world of the taboo and the musical — *Shocking Cliches* is one of six concerts the group has planned for this year.

Made up of Dan Russell, Hayley Bullock, Leo Kram, and Beck, the Art Quartet have wasted no time since starting a three-year residency at the iconic Yellow House in Potts Point.



Composer, curator and life model Andrew Batt-Rawden will take part in the upcoming Butt Naked Salon.



Batt-Rawden will recline nude while the quartet plays an autobiographical piece of music he has written.

Designed to blur the lines between performer and audience, the watcher and the watched, the series will include Butt Naked Salon, where Andrew Batt-Rawden — composer, curator, and life model — has signed up to pose in the nude while the quartet performs an autobiographical piece he composed.

A risqué experimental art salon created to evoke the Belle Epoch period of art history, the 90-minute concert will give the audience plenty of time to draw Batt-Rawden, who "said yes without a second thought".

"With composition you're always exposing yourself to the audience ... everybody is listening to your work and judging you," Batt-Rawden said.

"This is just adding the element of me being completely naked in front of an audience, heightening that experience of being exposed. I don't know what it's going to be like."

Batt-Rawden's autobiographical composition *27* will be performed by the Quartet throughout the event, as Wendy Sharpe paints the audience on to the walls, in a cycle of voyeurism Beck said he hoped would be truly immersive.