

## Control and failure: A framework for analysis of sound oriented intermedia art

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**Disciplinary background A.** The research has a basis in music theory and musicology.

**Disciplinary background B.** The argument is developed through intermedia art practice and criticism.

### Abstract

In this study, contemporary artistic strategies and intellectual attitudes to imperfection are exemplified with several significant projects, including activity of known sound artists, concerts of Krakow Studio of Electroacoustic Music and GrupLab collective, and projects by students of Intermedia department the Krakow Academy of Fine Arts, realised under the author's guidance.

European tradition draws plenty of constraints on musical creation. They seem to share a common core, which is an idea of dexterity, mastery, or perfection. In parallel, successive generations of young artists repeat the gesture of contesting such conventions. Composers of music inherit from the radical revolution which took place a century ago, as a result of anti-art movement. Atonal, ametric, and noise music intentionally lacked clearly audible regularities, and so it was perceived imperfect, or as a fallacy, to the layman listener.

On the other hand imperfectness, or even so called “aesthetics of failure”, enables participation in music of people who, due to insufficient skills, are normally outside the stage. A musical happening brings different goals than a traditional European concert oriented towards impeccable performance or recording of a musical work. Also the work itself is supposed to be a perfect, complex and coherent composition of sounds. Music as a social medium delivers a powerful platform of communication, however, in the case of Western artistic music, it is strictly regulated, severely limiting access to music creation to a narrow group of professionals. Focusing on communication instead of the perfection of sound material opens up new possibilities for sound oriented artistic projects, especially within the realm of intermedia art.

In recent years, significant changes in general understanding of music may be observed. In today's, conceptually oriented sound projects, often supported by advanced digital technology, the imperfection often establishes a goal. It is not the sound matter itself to be controlled, but to create an artistically interesting interaction through the medium of sound. This leads to many questions (particularly within the field of analysis), and paradoxes. Questions become even more urgent, since such an aesthetic shift already influences the music being created in European conservatoires. In quest of a theoretical framework adequate to the such recent tendencies, several criteria may seem promising. The control-failure opposition presents a high potential to polarise analysed phenomena.

**Interdisciplinary implications.** This work extends the musicological methodology to cover new areas of sound oriented artistic projects, related especially to intermedia art. This delivers terminology capable of describing new phenomena in art of sound, and proposes new classification of the most common artistic strategies.

## References

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