

OPINION

from Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stefka Venkova-Mosheva

on the candidature of Assoc. Prof. Yavor Dimov Genov PhD

In the competition for acquiring the academic position of **professor in**

Music Studies and Music Art (History of Western European Music 9th – 17th c.)

Professional Field 8.3. Music and Dance Arts announced in the State Gazette, issue 44 of May 14th, 2026, for the needs of the Music Department of the Institute of Art Studies – BAS,

according to the announcement in the “State Gazette” (Issue No. 44, May 14, 2026).

One candidate is participating in the competition—Assoc. Prof. Yavor Dimov Genov, Ph.D., from the Music Modernity Research Group, Music Department, Institute of Art Studies—Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The documentation submitted for the competition fully complies with the requirements of the Law on the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria. The activities listed by the candidate meet the minimum national scientometric indicators for holding the academic position of “Professor” in Field 8, “Arts,” Professional Area 8.3, “Music and Dance Arts,” and are consistent with the scope of the announced competition.

The research activities presented by Yavor Genov for the announced competition are numerous and diverse. They are categorized into several groups of indicators and meet the minimum national requirements: A) Dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree of “Doctor” – 50 points. C) Habilitation thesis: *The Knowledge of Music according to Thomas Morley’s A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke (c. 1557–1602): Between Musica Theoretica and Musica Practica.* Institute for Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2026 – 100 points. Included are creative performances and four published albums featuring lute performances—340. D) Published monograph not submitted as the main habilitation thesis: “Instrumental Music of the Renaissance. Studies on the Lute Repertoire.” Institute of Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2022 – 100 items; 18 studies and articles published in peer-reviewed and indexed journals in world-renowned databases and in specialized publications in the field of the arts – 405 items. D) 17 citations in peer-reviewed or indexed publications, monographs, and peer-reviewed collective volumes—215 points. E) Supervisor of 1 doctoral student who successfully defended their dissertation. Also included are: 8 participations in artistic projects, 2 workshops, and 180 points. I would like to emphasize that the activities presented significantly exceed the required minimum national standards.

Associate Professor Yavor Genov, Ph.D., is a renowned scholar with established authority as a musicologist in the field of early Western European music. Building on his research into Gregorian monody and the liturgical book known as the Antiphonary, he bridges the gap to Eastern Christianity through the Latin hymns dedicated to saints who are venerated in both churches. Starting from the realm of sacred music, which served as the foundation for the emergence of original musical compositions in the Western European tradition, he logically directs his research toward the field of Renaissance music.

I would like to highlight another very important aspect of Yavor Genov's musical development—his work as a lutenist. And this is not just about his successful career both nationally and internationally, or the release of several albums featuring his performances on renowned international labels, but about the internal synergy between scholar and artist, which bears rich fruit. This has paved the way for his growth as a significant contemporary researcher of the Renaissance lute repertoire. His in-depth understanding of notation systems, performance styles, and Renaissance musical thought in general has led to the next step—the pursuit of mastering musical knowledge characteristic of that era. His significant contributions include his numerous publications on Renaissance instrumental music and the lute repertoire, and now this monograph: *The Knowledge of Music according to Thomas Morley's A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke (c. 1557–1602): Between Musica Theoretica and Musica Practica.*"

Yavor Genov submitted a habilitation thesis and 11 articles for the competition. The publications were issued after the candidate's previous habilitation. They are in English and Bulgarian and have been published in prestigious scientific journals and collections in Bulgaria and abroad, a large portion of which are peer-reviewed publications. The submitted scholarly output is fully aligned with the competition's theme. It encompasses several thematic areas of research related to Thomas Morley's treatise *A Plaine and Easy Introduction to Practical Music and the Knowledge of Music*; the issues surrounding 16th-century lute tablatures and Emanuel Wurstizen's lute book; and 16th-century dance practice and lute music.

Yavor Genov's habilitation thesis, *The Knowledge of Music according to Thomas Morley's A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke (c. 1557–1602): Between Musica Theoretica and Musica Practica.*"¹ is an in-depth and timely musicological study dedicated to the treatise by the English Renaissance musician. The work commands respect for the rigorous theoretical foundations upon which it is built, as well as for the sheer volume of research it entails. The study's contributions are numerous; it serves as an inspiring example of how to take a specific subject and place it within the broadest possible cultural-historical context of English and Western European Renaissance music from the late 16th century. At the same time,

¹ Knowledge of Music According to Thomas Morley's (c. 1557–1602) *Morley's A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke (c. 1557–1602): Between Musica Theoretica and Musica Practica*. Sofia: Institute of Art Studies – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2026, ISBN: 978-619-7619-72-0, 172 pp.

the analytical scope of the treatise is clearly defined, which I also consider a significant contribution. I find it particularly valuable that the generalizations and observations in the text are based on a direct analysis and comparison of theoretical and musical sources. This could not have been achieved without the immense preliminary work carried out by Yavor Genov, namely, the translation of the text from English into Bulgarian, which is another significant contribution by the author.

The monograph is organized according to Thomas Morley's treatise itself, following its structure and the gradual introduction to the subject matter. The introduction begins with a compelling discussion of the object and subject of the study, as well as its goals and objectives. It emphasizes the main areas of focus that will be analyzed in the text. It outlines an approach to the treatise that "reveals a picture of musical thought not only strictly localized to practice in England, but also a broader horizon spanning the several decades preceding the author up to the first half and the middle of the 16th century, extending toward various cultural centers in Europe" (p. 7). An important question is raised, which emerges as one of the study's main contributions—the naming of phenomena and processes in the Bulgarian language. This is a complex task that requires the development of a terminological system in Bulgarian, considering both the concepts in use at the end of the 16th century and the terminological framework of contemporary Bulgarian musicology, which serves as a linguistic model.

The proposed literature review demonstrates the author's excellent knowledge of contemporary research on the topic. It also traces the most important treatises on music theory that preceded and followed Thomas Morley's text. In Chapter One, "Who Is Thomas Morley?" I find the presentation of the musician's personality, as well as his place in 16th-century English musical life, to be very well done. The context of England's complex religious and social environment, along with the exploration of the "teacher–student" relationship with other significant figures in English music of the period, allows for a comprehensive picture of the era to emerge. The various influences regarding the theoretical texts of that time are examined, seeking to determine the precise place of the *Introduction* among them. The second chapter, "Part One of the *Introduction*: The Properties of Tones in Terms of Pitch and Duration as Introductory Musical Knowledge," focuses on the specifics of monodic composition with regard to the pitch and duration properties of tones. The book provides a detailed discussion of solmization and the hexachordal scale, as well as the principles of mensural notation. The third chapter, "Part Two of the *Introduction*: The Discant as Fundamental Knowledge and Performance Skill in Polyphonic Thinking," examines the principles and methods necessary for developing the ability to create new voices based on an existing melody. The fourth chapter, "The Art of Composition as the Ultimate Goal of Musical Knowledge and Skills," elevates the knowledge already taught to a new, higher level—namely, the ability to compose new music. Of undoubted interest from a music-historical perspective is the examination of musical genres according to the model proposed by Thomas Morley, which was subsequently adopted by Michael Praetorius at the beginning of the

following century. The same applies to the modes, with consideration given to both terminological issues and matters concerning their structure and usage.

Yavor Genov's monograph is highly informative, terminologically precise, and set within a broad cultural-historical context. It can also serve as a teaching aid not only for students but also for musicologists, given the marginal place this topic occupies in Bulgarian musicology. I am convinced that it will contribute to further research in this area.

Of the 11 studies and articles presented by Yavor Genov, some are related to Thomas Morley's treatise, which has already been discussed above. Two publications deal specifically with dance practice and types of musical dance forms in the 16th century. The rest examine various aspects of Emanuel Wurstisen's lute book. I find the issues discussed to be highly insightful, with the main emphasis placed on 16th-century lute intabulations and the specific characteristics of various genres. In my view, the question of the separation of dance from choreography and its evolution into an independent instrumental art form is particularly important.

Yavor Genov has produced a diverse body of scholarly work characterized by a clearly defined focus and thematic scope of his research, appropriate methodology, and a high level of musical expertise, all of which contribute to the successful achievement of his scholarly goals. He is a highly qualified scholar with a wide range of musicological interests and an active record of publications and performances.

In light of the aforementioned contributions and innovative aspects of Assoc. Prof. Yavor Genov's overall work as a scholar, as well as my personal impressions of the candidate's professional qualities, **I offer a positive assessment and wholeheartedly support his candidacy for election to the academic position of "professor" in "Musicology and Musical Arts" (History of Western European Music, 9th–17th Centuries), professional field 8.3. "Music and Dance Arts."**

Sofia, October 5, 2026

Signature:

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