

# Music Theory

BY JOHN DUARTE

## John Dowland's Chromatic Harmony

**C**HROMATIC CHORDS CAN BECOME so overloaded and complex that it's often simpler to write them in staff notation than describe them with symbols. Likewise, chromatic harmony can reach a stage where it's not particularly helpful to analyze it—it's best to listen and decide if it sounds con-

vincing. This is especially likely to occur in contrapuntal music, where the separate lines have lives of their own and the harmony is more of a by-product than the framework that holds everything together.

This month's examples are from two lute fantasias by John Dowland. You'll find them a little easier to play if you tune your

third string to *F#* and go slowly, counting each measure as eight eighth-notes.

Ex. 1 and Ex. 2 are from "Forlorn Hope Fancy," built on a descending chromatic hexachord (six notes separated by half-steps; indicated in the music with brackets). In Ex. 1 the first two hexachords start from the note *B* in measures 1 and 2, and

**Ex. 1**



**Ex. 2**



**Ex. 3**



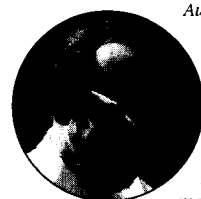
**Ex. 4**



**Ex. 5**



Am A7 D B7 Em B Em E7 A7 F#7 B



Author/educator John Duarte is one of the world's foremost composers for classical guitar, and his works have been performed by Andres Segovia, John Williams, Alexandre Lagoya, and many others.

the third one starts from measure 3's F# half-note. Observe how the hexachords overlap. There are also partial entries. The first begins with measure 1's F# and ends with measure 2's E $\flat$ . The second starts with measure 2's second-beat G and is five notes long (from G to D#).

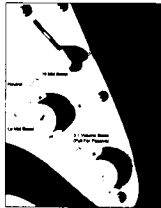
In Ex. 2 there are several overlapping entries. Notice how the tied notes serve as appoggiaturas (non-harmonic tones).

Ex. 3 and Ex. 4 are from Dowland's "Farewell Fancy," featuring an ascending chromatic hexachord. The entries in Ex. 3, where the ascending chromatic line is set against a primarily diatonic descending line, don't overlap. This isn't the case with Ex. 4.

Although your ear is drawn to the chromatic lines in Ex. 3 and Ex. 4, it's possible to analyze the harmony in the usual manner. Compare these examples to Ex. 5's modulating sequence and check out how Dowland elaborates on it. If you try to analyze Ex. 1 and Ex. 2 in the standard way, you'll find it's no simple task. ■

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