

## The Middle Baroque Period

(ca. 1630-1680)

### Characteristics of the middle Baroque

- ▶ Reduction in the amount of striking dissonances
- ▶ General simplification of rhythms
- ▶ Clearer feeling for tonal centers
  - ▶ More cadential V-I progressions
  - ▶ A sense of major/minor tonality
- ▶ Less frequent contrast and a greater sense of unity—contrast more frequently takes place between the sections of a work rather than within them
- ▶ The emergence of instrumental music, now equal in importance to vocal music

### Composers

- ▶ **Henry Purcell (1659-1695)**
  - ▶ One of the greatest English composers, known particularly for his vocal music
  - ▶ An organist and singer, and a great writer of melodies
- ▶ Other middle Baroque composers:
  - ▶ Jean-Baptiste Lully (France)
  - ▶ Giacomo Carissimi (Italy)
  - ▶ Girolami Frescobaldi (Italy)

### Genres and Concepts

- ▶ The genres of the early Baroque continue to be common in the middle Baroque (such as the madrigal, opera, and song)
- ▶ Additionally, there is now much more instrumental music
- ▶ Important concepts in this era (although not entirely new)
  - ▶ Figured bass lines, realized by the continuo players
  - ▶ Rules such as the "rule of the octave" for realizing unfigured bass lines
  - ▶ Compositions based on repeating ground bass patterns