

Though he was evidently revered in his day, relatively little is known of Jean Richafort's life. His appointments at Sint-Romboutskathedraal in Mechelen (1507–09) and Sint-Gilliskerk in Bruges (1542–47) as *maître de chapelle* are the only periods of his life to be dated with certainty. Between these appointments he is known to have served in the Royal Chapel in Paris around the time of King Francis I's meeting with Pope Leo X in Bologna in 1515.

Richafort's setting of the *Missa pro defunctis* was published by Pierre Attaingant in Paris in 1532, in the sixth of his seven-volume series of mass settings; however, the earliest known source is a hand-copied manuscript from the cathedral in Modena, dating from the 1520s (Richafort's connection with Modena is unclear, other than his having visited nearby Bologna in 1515). Two posthumous hand-copied sources also survive: a choirbook from the Hofkapelle in München [c.1555–63] and the third of the six Leiden Choirbooks [1559]. The mass follows the structure and text of the Parisian Rite, whose use continued in France until the end of the seventeenth century despite the post-Tridentine introduction of the now-familiar Roman Rite. Apart from some minor differences in text, the Parisian Rite sets the Gradual to text from Psalm 23 (22 Vulgate) and omits the *Dies irae*.

Structurally, Richafort's setting paraphrases the plainchant of each movement in the uppermost part, with the lower three parts freely composed in counterpoint beneath it. This is, of itself, unremarkable among contemporaneous Requiem mass settings. What sets this work apart is the composer's inclusion of two canonic voice parts that recurrently quote from the *cantus firmus* of Josquin's chanson *Nymphes, nappes*: “circumdederunt me gemitus mortis, dolores inferni circumdederunt me” (“the groans of death have surrounded me, the sorrows of death have encircled me”). This canon persists in its native F tonality throughout the mass setting, while Richafort shifts the tonality of successive movements from F to D to A to G, consistent with each underlying chant. Not only, then, are the canonic voices ‘surrounded’ by the other four voices in terms of their vocal ambitus in the tenor/baritone register, they are increasingly ‘encircled’ by alien tonality. The final element of compositional genius appears in the two longest movements — the *Graduale* and the *Offertorium* — where Richafort extends the canonic motif with yet another Josquin quote: “c'est douleur non pareille” (“it is a grief without equal”) from the chanson *Faulte d'argent*, in which context it is a somewhat more irreverent reference to impecunity, rather than bereavement. The end result is the arguably the most ingenious sixteenth-century setting of the Requiem mass, with chant paraphrase, canon, and free counterpoint interwoven in such a cunning way as to sound completely uncontrived.

“*In memoriam Josquin des Prez*”? No such dedication appears in any of the sources, though the copyist of the Leiden Choirbook was evidently so seduced by the musical references to Josquin as to attribute the work to him (despite clear attribution to Richafort in the three earlier sources). Historical evidence suggests some sort of master–pupil relationship, formal or otherwise, between Josquin and Richafort. Although it cannot be claimed with any certainty that Richafort composed his mass as a memorial to his ‘teacher’ — let alone that he composed it on the occasion of Josquin's death in August 1521 — the fact that the earliest surviving source dates from the 1520s and the inclusion of musical quotations from two secular works by Josquin (in such a brilliant manner that rivalled the great master himself) provide compelling evidence to justify the dedicatory subtitle.

Editorial Notes:

This edition is based predominantly on the Modena and München sources, which exist in digitised form in the respective libraries. The Leiden Choirbook was also consulted. The sources are largely concordant apart from typical minor variances in rhythm, ligation and word underlay, although (as noted in the respective movements in this edition) the Modena source is missing parts of the *Benedictus* and *Agnus Dei* and the entire *Communio* movement. The digitised source shows that the choirbook has been rebound in comparatively recent times, and the only folio numbering has been added in pencil by a modern hand, thus disguising any missing folios at first reading. It seems likely that a number of original folios — containing the missing sections of Richafort's mass, as well as most of the unidentified mass that misleadingly appears to be the continuation of Richafort's — were lost long before the book was rebound. The sources also disagree on the voicing of the chant incipits, the München source going so far as to set them in the lower octave of the bass register. Given that the *Superius* carries the chant, in embellished form, throughout the mass, it seems logical that that voice should also intone the chant incipits.

This edition is set at the original notated pitch. Editorial accidentals are indicated above the note. Original note values are retained: thus, consistent with 16th-century convention, the C mensuration sign and its modern-equivalent C time signature signify a semibreve tactus. Bar lines are added only to aid reading and direction: ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ beats implied by their position should never take precedence over phrasing or word stress. Ligatures and coloration in the source are acknowledged with overarching square brackets and open ‘corner’ brackets respectively. Word underlay reflects editorial judgment and is freely adjusted: editorial text re-iteration not explicit in any source is indicated in *italic*.

(see over for texts and translations)