

# Wild Horses

Words and Music: Jean Ritchie (b. 1922)

Interpretation and Arrangement: J. Todd Frazier (b. 1969)

Of **Wild Horses**, Frazier explains: “When asked by Renee Fleming to arrange Jean Ritchie’s **Wild Horses** for Orchestra and Voice, I embraced the opportunity immediately. After my first hearing of Jean’s original voice and dulcimer recording of **Wild Horses** from her album **Mountain Hearth & Home**, I became mesmerized by the song. I also felt it would provide wonderful contrast paired with **We Hold These Truths**, not only in tempo and style, but also in its representation of freedom as an unbridled thirst in nature with verses like; “*Out of the way, you’ll get run over; Wild things never will bear the rein! Fly the fences, smash the clover. Out of the way they’re (Wild Horses) gone again!*”



Drawing upon my own familiarity with and playing of the dulcimer and bluegrass/folk guitar, I immediately searched for a way to create an orchestral arrangement that retained the authentic style of Ritchie’s playing and singing, something that I knew could be lost in a straightforward orchestration. What resulted is much more than an orchestration, and even more than an arrangement, its a work inspired by and based on the original, but expanded in many ways: a fiddle solo written for the concertmaster, a modulation, multiple interludes and responses for the orchestra, opportunities for the voice to expressively embellish, and a non traditional strumming approach with the strings that is meant to retain the warm open string, resonate quality of the lap dulcimer so unique in Jean’s recording.

*Over the hills and over the mountains, Over the ridges high and low,  
See the dust and listen to the thunder look-it them wild horses go!  
Run, come a long my pretty little thing, Run, come along, my darlin';  
Run, come along, we'll take a little trip, Over the hills to Harlan.*

*Round the bend comes Old Ninety-seven, Hear her holler, hear her strain!  
Horses scream and paw for Heaven, Runnin' a race with a railroad train!  
Oh, run, come a long my pretty little thing, Run, come along, my darlin';  
Run, come along, we'll take a little trip, Over the hills to Harlan.*

*Out of the way, you'll get run over; Wild things never will bear the rein!  
Fly the fences, smash the clover. Out of the way they're gone again!  
Oh, run, come a long my pretty little thing, Run, come along, my darlin';  
Run, come along, we'll take a little trip, Over the hills to Harlan.*

*Wind in the mane and the devil in the saddle, Fire in the hoof and blood in the eye!  
Who knows, who knows where they're goin', but Look-it them wild horses fly!  
Oh, run, come a long my pretty little thing, Run, come along, my darlin';  
Run, come along, we'll take a little trip, Over the hills to Harlan...*