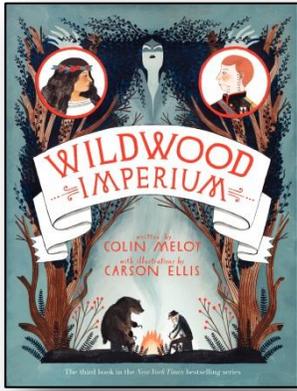


OFFICIAL *WILDWOOD IMPERIUM* PLAYLIST

CREATED BY COLIN MELOY



1. “Mermaid Parade,” Phosphorescent

I listened to this song over and over while I wrote the last major scene of the book. Somehow, the feeling of bittersweet loss here seemed to just fit with what I was trying to evoke at the end. It’s such a sad story, this one.

2. “The Mother We Share,” Chvrches

Confessional: in fifth grade, I read all of Piers Anthony’s Xanth novels back to back, mostly in bed, listening to tapes on my old Sony Sports Boombox. I would set my alarm and wake up at dawn to read before school; after school, I would climb back into bed and keep reading. I listened exclusively to Scritti Politti and Depeche Mode and Yaz. Any music now that deliberately calls on that golden era of British synthpop makes me think of reading too much.

3. “Native Dreams,” Rose Windows

I can only aspire to the level of epicness that is evident in this song; if only *Wildwood Imperium* was half as epic, I would be satisfied. I hear marching armies and bloodied battleaxes when I hear this song. This band is so, so good.

4. “Little Red Riding Hood Hit the Road,” Robert Wyatt

For whatever reason, I keep coming back to the Canterbury scene of the early seventies when I think of music that is evocative of the book. Maybe it’s because there’s a funny kind of straddling going on with this top-shelf, university-educated prog music—it has one foot steadily set in the world of folktale and the other foot somewhere toeing about in deep psychedelia.

5. “In the Court of the Crimson King,” King Crimson

More Canterbury scene; this one mentions a fire witch and has a killer riff. And it’s fairly long. I would recommend listening to this song while reading the first chapter of *Wildwood Imperium*.

6. “The Lady Rachel,” Kevin Ayers

Two things going for this one: Kevin Ayers was a veteran of the Canterbury prog scene, *and* the titular character in this song shares a name with one of the main characters in *Wildwood Imperium*. Reason enough!

7. “Janitor of Lunacy,” Nico

Whenever I think of the Verdant Empress, who we meet in the first section of the book, I think that were she at any point to burst into song, she’d likely sound a whole lot like Nico. I’m not sure what a janitor of lunacy is (apparently Nico’d written this one about Brian Jones), but it’s a kind of creepy that I can really get behind.

8. “I’ve Been a Mess,” American Music Club

I picked this song mainly because of the first line of the first verse: “Lazarus wasn’t grateful for his second wind.” Not to get to spoiler-y here, but I think it’s a sentiment that Alexei, the mechanical boy prince, would relate to.

9. “Night Before Mutiny,” Serafina Steer

“Queen of a wide open sea.” This song makes me think of the loneliness of the ocean, of those who ply the waters of the seas. Prue, later in the book, gets a brief taste of this loneliness and she does not find it to her liking one bit.



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