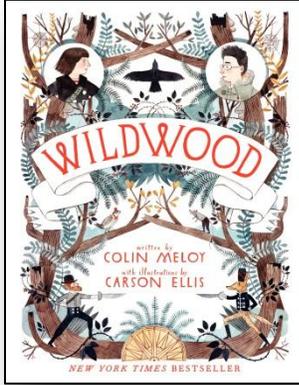


OFFICIAL *WILDWOOD* PLAYLIST

CREATED BY COLIN MELOY & CARSON ELLIS



1. “Ramble On,” Led Zeppelin

COLIN MELOY: I remember reading an interview with Evan Dando from the Lemonheads right around the time the first Lord of the Rings movie came out, bemoaning the fact that the director hadn’t included a *single* Zeppelin song in the movie. I tend to agree; I mean, how rad would it’ve been after that dramatic ending in *The Return of the King*, with all its royal celebrations and slo-mo montages—the screen goes black and those monster riffs of “Immigrant Song” kick in? Mind-

blowing. So much incredible music in the 60s and 70s was directly fueled by mid-century fantasy fiction, something that *Wildwood* owes much to; I feel it would be deeply remiss here not to include a little Zepp.

2. “Marching Song,” Esben and the Witch

COLIN MELOY: That said, when I was deep in my preadolescent reverie of fantasy and sci-fi, my friends and I would meet every weekend at someone’s house to play Dungeons & Dragons. There. Confession made. And as everyone knows, the best Dungeon Masters always partnered up their biggest action scenarios with music. While I think it may have been de rigueur to blast Zeppelin or Hawkwind for some folks, I considered myself to be somewhat of a sophisticate. Joy Division was perfect music for a slow, suspenseful crawl through a gelatinous cube-infested grotto. The Legendary Pink Dots added an extra dimension to a party’s first encounter with some weird, reclusive nemesis in a castle tower. An Enchantress might appear to “Under Ice” by Kate Bush or anything from Siouxsie’s output. When I first heard this song from Brighton, England’s Esben and the Witch (even the name is evocative of those days) I imagined a new generation of over-imaginative ten-year-olds pairing their fantastical ramblings with the drowning rains and empty plains of this song.

3. “Take It Easy,” Hopeton Lewis

COLIN MELOY: Switching gears, here. Rocksteady, a kind of precursor to the reggae explosion of the 70s, was a beautiful, thoughtful, random amalgam of classic R&B and traditional Jamaican rhythms. It’s clearly the kind of music that is birthed out of necessity; a bunch of poor kids in the slums of Kingston figuring out for themselves how to re-create the sounds that they were hearing over crappy radio speakers: Sam Cooke, Ben E. King, and Sam & Dave. And what came out wasn’t *quite* the same, but beautiful and weird and extraordinary in its own right. All this to say: I think that rocksteady music is the music of true enjoyment, the aural equivalent of a slice of bacon, and a rocksteady party was the kind of party I imagined Prue’s parents would throw to celebrate Mac and Prue’s joyful return. And I’ll bet that Prue’s dad dug deep for some Lewis sides—maybe he even had them on 45.

4. “Tam Lin,” Fairport Convention

COLIN MELOY: My 60s Brit Folk obsession is fairly well documented, but I thought I’d be remiss if I didn’t include an old folk song in this list. This one, in particular, features a forbidding forest and an evil fairy queen and a pair of star-crossed lovers. Clocking in just north of seven minutes, it’s as immersive and complete a narrative as a song can hope to retell.

5. “I Lost Something in the Hills,” Sibylle Baier

CARSON ELLIS: I love Sibylle Baier’s mournful songs and I listened to them a lot when I was working on *Wildwood*, especially during the rainy months. Portland winters can be dreary and sometimes gloomy music is the best thing for them. This isn’t my very favorite song of hers, but I chose it because, you know, the title.

6. “My Lovely Elizabeth,” S. E. Rogie

CARSON ELLIS: *Wildwood* has a lot of illustrations—eighty-five in all—and it was hard work getting them done. Man, I love to draw but at times this project was exhausting. At times it was downright *grueling*. Fortunately, I have some remedies for this: taking a walk always helps, as does yoga, as does S. E. Rogie.

7. “Katie Cruel,” Karen Dalton

CARSON ELLIS: This is a spooky traditional song that dates back to the Revolutionary War. Like *Wildwood*'s villainess, Alexandra, Katie Cruel roams the forest and the “bogs and mire,” jilted and in exile. This is a good song to listen to while walking in Forest Park, the real woods that were the inspiration for *Wildwood*'s Impassable Wilderness. Or while walking in any misty, quiet forest where beards of moss hang from the gnarled branches of dead trees and there's little sign of civilization. You can imagine that around any bend you might find the solitary hut of Katie Cruel, a little curl of smoke drifting up from its chimney and the sound of her high lonesome banjo coming from within. I also love this song's beautiful, totally unhinged chorus:

*Oh that I was where I would be,
Then I would be where I am not,
Here I am where I must be
Go where I would, I cannot.*

8. “Over the Hills and Far Away,” Led Zeppelin

CARSON ELLIS: I'm a longtime Led Zeppelin fan and this song, in addition to having a fitting title, was another one I loved when I was Prue's age. I first heard it around the time I read *The Hobbit*, and I thought its medieval vagabond vibe was awesome. I'm also a sucker for a song that starts with a pretty guitar part and then gets *crazy*. As an adult I tend to like Zeppelin's earlier, bluesier stuff better but, as a kid, I loved the Middle Earth-ish stuff and “Over the Hills and Far Away” was my jam.

BALZER + BRAY

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