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New Release Tuesday: October 15, 2013

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It's damn near an old folks home below, but some fresh meat makes our list as well.



Kitchens of Distinction – *Folly*. In 1989 there wasn't a lot for an all-leaning gay boy to cling to; sure, Bronski Beat and Erasure did their best for the New Wave, but guitar-centric homos had next to nothing. The U.K. trio Kitchens of Distinction, fronted by the openly gay and unapologetic Patrick Fitzgerald, helped to break some glass ceilings and usher in shoegaze on their early records. Nineteen years since the group's last release comes *Folly*, a decidedly gentle version of the original band, but as fascinating and open as ever. From the lushly cinematic "Photographing Rain" to the psychedelic single "Japan to Jupiter," they return in high style. Let's show our elders some real respect this time, boys.

Paul McCartney – *New*. Speaking of old-timers, Sir Paul returns with his 16th solo album and his first of original tunes since 2007, and boy is it a good one. With help from Mark Ronson (the title track, "Alligator"), Paul Epworth ("Save Us") and Giles Martin ("On My Way to Work"), he sounds refreshed and inspired. And, most gloriously, a lot like a little band known as The Beatles.

Pearl Jam – *Lightning Bolt*. From old folks to middle-aged ones, these grunge flagbearers do what they do best on this 10th release. Not as good as the band's debut, *Ten*, but definitely solid work. There are big stadium ballads ("Sirens"), good time blues-rock ("Let the Records Play") and barn-burning grunge ("Mind Your Manners").

Lucy Wainwright Roche – *There's a Last Time for Everything*. It's hard to keep up with the Wainwright clan (Rufus, Martha), but here's another—Lucy Wainwright Roche. I wish she had more of her father's acerbic wit and her mother's (Suzzy Roche) oddball charm, but her sophomore release is lovely nonetheless. She's a singer-songwriter through and through, from the Colin Meloy duet "Seek and Hide" to her inspired acoustic rendering of Robyn's indefatigable "Call Your Girlfriend" (not available to post, but seek it out).

Diane Birch – *Speak a Little Louder*. Her debut Bible Belt was a stellar introduction to a protean talent—a fantastic singer-songwriter in the vein of Joni Mitchell and Laura Nyro. This follow-up is more contemporary in sound and outlook, but her talent shines through the production. The title tune is Sinead O'Connor in pop mode, "All the Love You Got" is Stevie Nicks-meets-Adele, and I wish I could find a link to "Unfkd," 'cause it's a stellar, profane ballad worth getting to know.

Gary Numan – *Splinter (Songs from a Broken Mind)*. He will always be known for his one-hit wonder "Cars," but the electro-wunderkind was always way more than that. On his 20th record he keeps plumbing the technological crux between industrial and metal he started exploring in the mid-80s and that he always seems to renew just enough to keep it interesting. He's got a great metal whine on "I Am Dust," a great Arabic one on "Splinter" and a potential alt-rock radio hit with "Here in the Black." Check him out at the Masonic Lodge this Friday night.

Kevin Devine – *Bulldozer*. This Brooklyn songwriter Kickstarter-funded both this, his seventh release, and *Bubblegum*, his eighth (with the Goddamn Band) due later this month. He veers from acoustic ballads ("From Here") to rockier fare with a sweet, sincere tenor built for pop.

Also Released:

[Heavenly Beat – *Prominence*](#)

[The Avett Brothers – *Magpie and the Dandelion*](#)

The Head & the Heart – *Let's Be Still*

Cults – *Static*

Bear's Den – *Agape*

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