



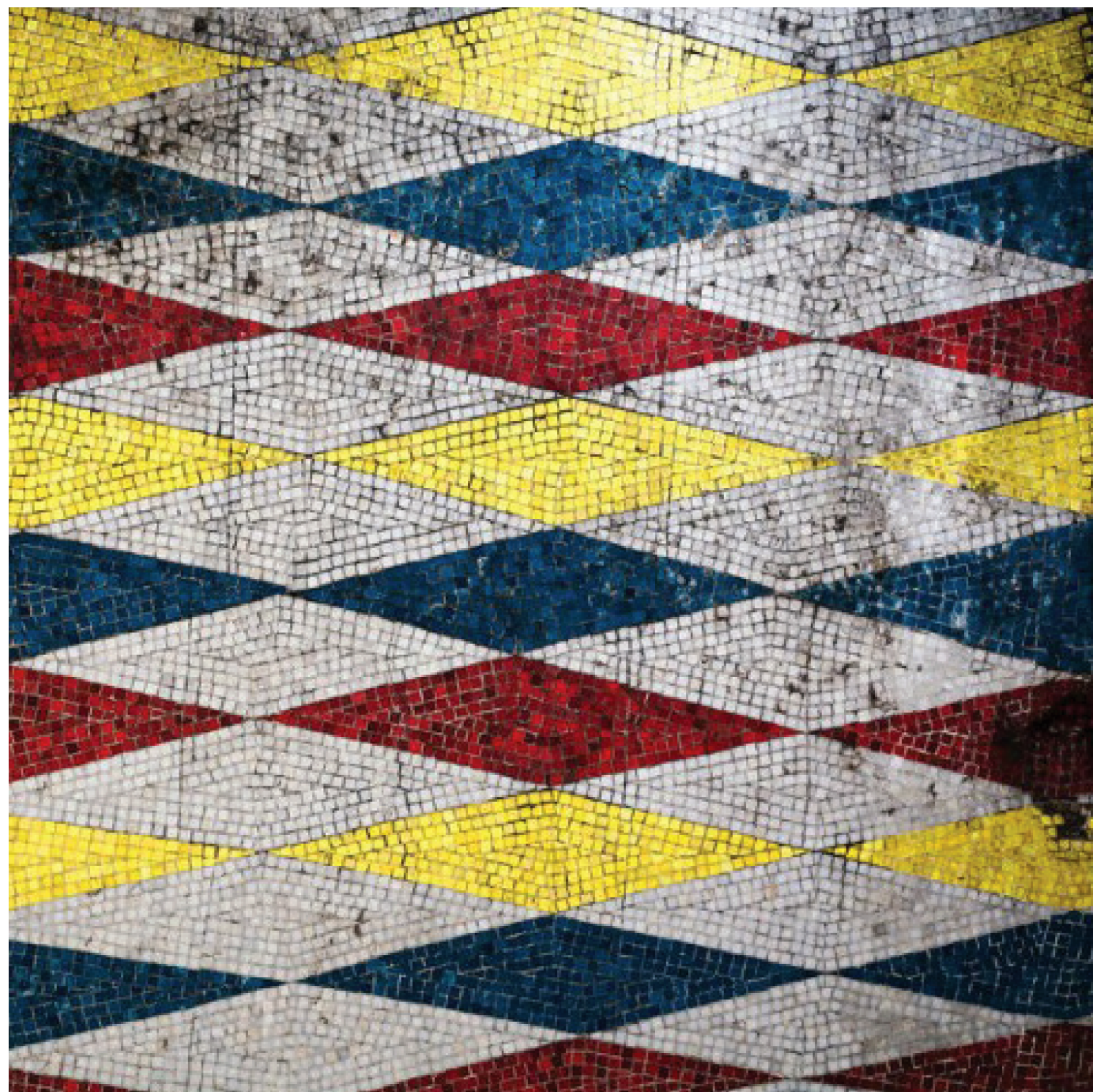
## Reviews: Little Green Cars leans atmospheric on new album 'Ephemera'

**Soren Spicknall**

WIIT STATION MANAGER

For the last few years, Little Green Cars have been a quietly brewing phenomenon. Originating from Dublin, the group built up a regional following on the strength of their two debut EPs, both self-released in 2008, and signed with kingmaking label Glassnote (home of Mumford & Sons and Phoenix) in 2013. Their debut full-length, *Absolute Zero*, spawned two singles which became mainstays of college radio in the Southeast U.S., and led to festival sets at SXSW, Lollapalooza, and elsewhere. You'd be forgiven right now for not knowing their name, but in a few years' time that may no longer be the case.

For a band on the cusp of such mainstream success, Little Green Cars are not afraid to switch up their formula. Their latest album, *Ephemera*, was released more than a month ago, but after finally being able to spend some time with it, many pronounced differences from its predecessor justify a late review. While *Absolute Zero* is heavily influenced by American folk rock (hence the band's success in the same territory as groups like Dawes and Delta Spirit), *Ephemera* mostly takes an alternate approach. With a few exceptions, gone are the layered, mixed-gender choruses of "Harper Lee" and "The John Wayne", replaced with solo lead vocals from Stevie Appleby and Faye O'Rourke that largely define each melody on their own. This new album is less percussive,



*Photo courtesy of Little Green Cars*

too, awash in electrified reverb reminiscent of something from The xx. The lyrical subject matter inside reflects those musical changes wonderfully, introspective and largely dark in tone.

Though *Ephemera* certainly marks a shift for Little Green Cars, that shift seems to be a sidestep rather than a clear upward progression. Industry snobs will be happy to know that Markus Dravs' radio-friendly production work has been replaced with a less layer-heavy mix from Rob Kirwan, resulting in performances that could reasonably be replicated live with only the five current members of the band. However, that close production style has revealed that the group's electrified shift lacks vigor at times, and some of the compositions on *Ephemera* tend to blend together, something that only happens on *Absolute Zero* if you are paying zero attention.

If this new direction is the future of Little Green Cars, they'll need to innovate more on their next album to keep the attention of their fans and critics. *Absolute Zero*, while not for everyone, was an unmistakable work that set the tone for the group's rise to prominence. *Ephemera*, on the other hand, is more palatable to a wider range of "indie" listeners, but even its strongest moments are unlikely to get stuck in your head or have the same public staying power as anything from the better half of their previous work. 6.6/10

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*Photos by Soren Spicknall*