

## Local Beat: The Avett Brothers

Ashleigh Phillips, Staff Writer



photo from greenshoelace.com

In 2008 when I first moved to Raleigh, every time I opened my mouth I immediately became the Southern entertainment for all who heard me. After what seemed to be the fiftieth time I repeated "How now brown cow?" for my beckoning friends I got an unusual response. Instead of the assertion of a carefully crafted grand master sentence that would showcase my Northampton County vowels and phonetics a guy asked me, "Do you know the Avett Brothers?" Surprised by the question all I could come back with was, "Excuse me, but what?" The guy simply said, "The Avett Brothers, I figured you'd be a fan since they have some banjo picking in their music." I was annoyed that the guy had assumed that just because I talk different I'd like hillbilly music, but more importantly, being the music fiend I am, I looked up the Avett Brothers as soon as I got back to my dorm.

I discovered a three piece band from Concord, North Carolina whose sound first came across to me as if Lennon and McCartney had grown up in the Appalachians instead of Liverpool. The music had the raw energy of punk and the sadness of a country honky-tonk at the same time. The lyrics were catchy and Hank Williams genuine. I couldn't get enough. As I studied their music and listened to their passion packed lyrics, I began to feel like I knew Seth and Scott Avett. I dreamed that they had been raised on grits and Sunday school just like me, so I did some research. Although I didn't find anything about grits I found out that the brothers had started out in their own hard rock band called Nemo, but the music they were making wasn't leaving them feeling fulfilled. After experimenting by playing some acoustics on front porches the brothers decided to return to the bluegrass roots of their fathers. Seth and Scott picked up banjo, fiddle, and guitar and began to write about where they came from. The

brilliant results of their homecoming decision are in the nine releases that were out by the time I discovered the band.

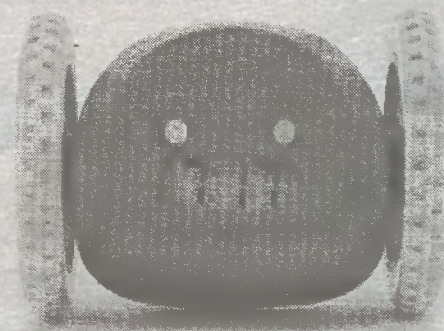
Producer Rick Rubin, most noted for working with the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Johnny Cash, noticed the Avett Brothers about the same time I did and they quickly became his new favorite band. Rubin naturally produced the Brothers' highly anticipated major label debut, *I and Love and You*, which came out last September. *I and Love and You*, based more on complex piano and string beauties than banjo picking grooves is a new direction for the Avetts, but it's no less real than any of their other releases. It's just as full of heart as anything they have ever done, bringing you back home to feel not only the warm and fuzzies but the hardships too.

Give the Avetts a listen and you surely won't be disappointed. For a playful sing-a-long try "Kick Drum Heart" from *I and Love and You*. For something lower key try "Murder in the City" off *The Second Gleam* which tenderly discusses what it means to be a family. Or, you can go the Rubin route. Rubin first fell in love with the Avetts through their 2008 release, *Emotionalism*, which is filled with gems. "Will You Return?" is a delightful romp with Beatles harmonies circa 1963 and "The Ballad of Love and Hate" is sweet poetry quite possibly reminiscent of Bob Dylan circa 1966. If you dig the Avetts you may enjoy some of their influences (My Morning Jacket, The Strokes, or the White Stripes) and contemporaries (Elvis Perkins, Dr. Dog, Carolina Chocolate Drops, Langhorne Slim, or Old Crow Medicine Show.)

So kids the moral of this story is to stay true to your down home roots, whether they come in the form of unusual accents or hand-me-down music styles, and good things will come your way.

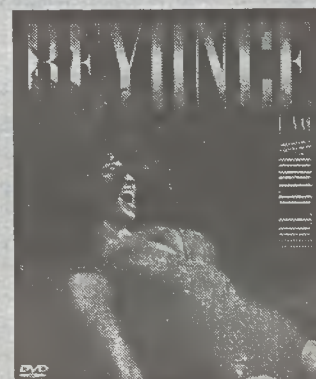
## 2010 Holiday Gift Guide

gathered by Ashleigh Phillips and Amy Hruby



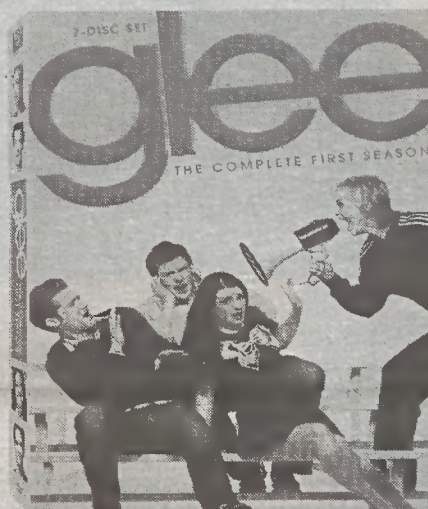
### For the oversleeper: Clocky (\$40)

This alarm clock will jump off the nightstand and wheel around the room sounding off until you get up and catch it. [nandahome.com/products/clocky/](http://nandahome.com/products/clocky/)



### For the diva: Beyoncé: I am... World Tour (\$18)

Follow the Queen B as she dazzles her audience on her third solo tour. [amazon.com/Beyonce-Am-World-Tour-Deluxe](http://amazon.com/Beyonce-Am-World-Tour-Deluxe)



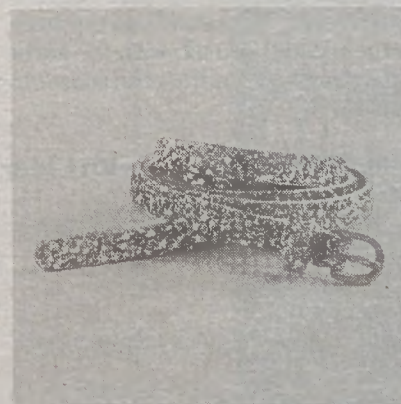
### For the Gleeek: Glee, The Complete First Season (\$45)

22 episodes of sing-a-long song and dance. [amazon.com/Glee-Complete-Season-Matthew-Morrison/dp/Boo32JTV6U](http://amazon.com/Glee-Complete-Season-Matthew-Morrison/dp/Boo32JTV6U)



### For your CORNiest friend: Corn Earrings (\$5)

<http://www.etsy.com/listing/52179798/it-is-in-everything-corn-earrings>



### For your put-together friend: Superskinny Glitter Belt from J. Crew (\$20) [jcrew.com](http://jcrew.com)



### For the music/movie lover: Tron Soundtrack (out December 7th)

Composed by Daft Punk, the soundtrack to Disney's upcoming film has already been lauded by music critics. *Tron* hits theatres December 17th starring Jeff Bridges and Olivia Wilde.

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