

# Park offers Essentials entertainment Dec. 12

Source: <http://www.northumberlandtoday.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=2204162>

By JEFF GARD

Go to a concert by Canadian a cappella group The Essentials and you can expect to have a good time.

Essentials members Joe Oliva (bass), Janet Turner (girl, as it says on the group's website) and brothers Dan (tenor) and Thom (baritone) Speck keep things fun whether they are preparing to perform or actually up in front of a crowd.

"Our rehearsals are probably about 75% efficient," Oliva says. "We have fun and I think that fun translates to the stage. We're up there having fun and when we have fun, the audience has fun."

Next Saturday, Dec. 12, The Essentials will perform at the Park Playhouse in Cobourg.

"It doesn't seem like work at all," says Turner, the group's newest member.

Turner joined The Essentials in August, following the departure of another member. The last time the group was seeking a new member, they looked at adding a female for the first time. However, they didn't find one that was the best singer of those who applied.

This time, they lucked out with Turner.

"We were looking for best singer again and Janet was the best singer," Oliva said. "People that have seen us before say she's the perfect fit. Janet also has a unique style to her voice."

Oliva noted the addition of Turner also allows The Essentials to broaden their performance, such as adding male/female duets to the show. In the past, the group hasn't been afraid to cover songs performed by female artists, such as One Fine Day, but they "got some funny looks," Oliva laughed.

While their Cobourg performance is billed as a Christmas show, The Essentials will sing other favourites in addition to the holiday tunes.

They have released two regular studio albums, a live album and a Christmas album.

That Christmas album was the 2008 release, Remember December.

"It was interesting because when you take Christmas music, you really have to make it your own," Oliva says.

Between touring, which includes singing national anthems like a Toronto Raptors NBA game last month, The Essentials are recording their next studio album, which will include more original tunes as the group begins to stray away more from covering songs.

Oliva says the music industry has changed a lot and The Essentials are changing with it, specifically with using the Internet to their advantage. They keep their website ([www.essentialsmusic.com](http://www.essentialsmusic.com)) updated regularly, and even post video blogs at time. They also have a Twitter account.

"Behind it all there has to be great music," he says.

Tickets are \$22.50 for the Park Playhouse show. Call 905-377-9595 or visit [www.park-playhouse.ca](http://www.park-playhouse.ca) for more information.