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## Sundance fave to be screened at film fest

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Madison West grad Marc Webb's "500 Days of Summer," starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Zooey Deschanel, will open this year's Wisconsin Film Festival. - Fox Searchlight photo

Madison West grad Marc Webb's first feature film, "500 Days Of Summer," was the toast of the Sundance Film Festival earlier this year. Now Webb is bringing the film back home to Madison for the opening night of the Wisconsin Film Festival.

The full schedule for the 2009 Wisconsin Film Festival, which runs April 2-5, was posted online March 5 at [wifilmfest.org](http://wifilmfest.org). It features more than 100 feature-length and short films, including a healthy dose of Wisconsin-connected filmmakers like Webb.

"500 Days of Summer," a bittersweet romantic comedy starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Zooey Deschanel, premiered before a sold-out crowd of more than 1,500 at Sundance and got rave notices from critics ("It'll grab you," wrote Rolling Stone's Peter Travers). The film was picked up for distribution by Fox Searchlight and was not expected to hit the festival circuit, but Webb is scheduled to present the film at the Orpheum Theater on Thursday, April 2.

Tickets officially go on sale at noon Saturday, March 7, online through the film fest site and in person at the second-floor festival box office at the UW Memorial Union, 800 Langdon St. Tickets range from \$7 for a single ticket to \$5.25 a ticket if you're buying in bulk orders of 13 to 16 tickets; student tickets range from \$3.25 to \$4.

Some of the highlights from the just-released film festival schedule:

**"Anvil! The Story of Anvil,"** a "Spinal Tap"-style mockumentary about the travails of an aging Canadian heavy metal band, with testimonials from real-life rockers Lars Ulrich and Lemmy from Motorhead.

**"Art & Copy,"** a documentary by another ex-Madisonian filmmaker, Doug Pray ("Surfwise"), about the rise of the advertising industry. Pray is scheduled to present the film in Madison.

**"Being Bucky,"** the world premiere of a documentary about seven students who had the honor to don the Bucky Badger costume.

**"Lion's Den,"** an Argentinian drama about a pregnant woman wrongly imprisoned for murder and determined to give her child a better life. It's one of several high-profile films from Central and South American filmmakers at this year's fest.

**"Milk in the Land: Ballad of an American Drink,"** an irreverent look at the state's favorite beverage, mixing stop-motion animation and archival footage.

**"Paper or Plastic?"** which may end up being the "Spellbound" of grocery bagging, an entertaining doc about grocery clerks traveling to Vegas for a national bagging competition.

**"Revanche,"** an odd spin on "Bonnie and Clyde" as a Ukrainian immigrant and an Austrian laborer rob a bank and go on the lam. An Oscar nominee this year for Best Foreign-Language Film, it's the first theatrical release from the respected Criterion Collection.

**"The Rockafire Explosion,"** the quintessential late-night festival offering, a strange documentary about a group of techies who reprogram animatronic Chuck E. Cheese characters and film the results for YouTube.

**"Silent Light,"** Mexican director Carlos Reygadas' drama about a love triangle in a Mennonite community in northern Mexico, which has been compared to the work of Terrence Malick.

**"Sonic Youth: Sleeping Nights Awake,"** the first-ever concert film featuring the avant-garde rock band.

**"Sparrow,"** an elegant Hong Kong thriller from Johnnie To ("Exiled") about a quartet of master pickpockets who get more than they bargained for from a femme fatale.

**"Winter of Frozen Dreams,"** a noir thriller starring Thora Birch and Keith Carradine that's based on the real-life Barbara Hoffman murder case in Madison.

If past trends are any indication, expect at least a couple of films to sell out on the first day. One smart strategy is to get tickets early for locally produced films premiering in smaller venues, since friends and families tend to pack the seats early (like last year's "Mad City Chickens" screening at Monona Terrace). You don't have to jump quite as early for foreign films, usually, or for anything showing in the gigantic Orpheum Theatre, although "500 Days of Summer" may be the exception to that rule.

If you plan on standing in line at the Union box office for your tickets this weekend, be sure to stop by the Daily Scoop downstairs first. Babcock Dairy has a new limited-edition festival-themed flavor of ice cream, "In the Dark," for sale beginning on Saturday, that features chocolate malt ice cream with chocolate truffle pieces, a fudge swirl and pecans.