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Film critic Duane Dudek offers his take on the state of the movie world

State Film Fest - "500" Highlights

By [Duane Dudek](#) of the Journal Sentinel

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I've got a ticket and press pass to the Wisconsin Film Festival, but will have to miss what could be one of its highlights tonight; the Midwest premiere of "500 Days of Summer."

The flirtatious boy-loves-girl, girl-doesn't-love-him-back romantic comedy is the directorial debut of Madison native Marc Webb.



See the trailer below.

The film, due nationwide in July, has been getting plenty of love for its unconventional approach to a familiar genre and sophisticated use of pop music.

Webb (left), a graduate of Madison West High School, is a music video veteran. An early job was on the grunge documentary "Hype," and he has directed videos for Teddy Geiger, Daniel Powter and the teen movie trailer parody "I'm Not Okay," by My Chemical Romance. See the music video below.

[Film critic and blogger Steve Ramos](#), who also writes for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, saw the film at the Sundance Film Festival, and wrote: "The quiet-ist Sundance Film Festival in recent memory, as well as the warmest, ended with a capacity crowd ... applauding actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt after an early morning screening of his romance '500 Days of Summer.' Sly, slick and sweet thanks to starring performances by Gordon-Levitt and Zooey Deschanel, director Marc Webb's debut feature exited Park City with enthusiastic word-of-mouth, what every filmmaker wants out of Sundance."

In an e-mail, Wisconsin Film Festival director Meg Hamel said it "perfectly captures having a crush." feelings "of growing attraction, and of doubt. Everyone has experienced those feelings, and will see a bit of themselves" in the characters."

"I think this is why the film is likely to be successful: it makes you think about the choices you've made in your past relationships, and does it in a dazzling, thoroughly satisfying way."

[In my interview with Webb](#), he talks about his formative years in Madison. In [another interview](#) with The Playlist, he talks about the music in the film - from The Smiths to Patrick Swayze - in detail.

"500 Days of Summer" is due for wider release in July.

[The Wisconsin Film Festival](#) runs through Sunday in Madison.