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Short film tour goes off the beaten path

Tour includes Dubuque, Madison and Chicago

by **SANDYE VOIGHT**

Short films - that Academy Awards category unfamiliar to most tri-staters - could become more familiar after a nonprofit group brings regular short-film screenings to Dubuque next year.

As a preview of things to come, nine assorted short films and a performance by singer-songwriter Andrew Bird, Friday, Oct. 6, at Voices from the Warehouse, will be a fund-raiser for the Chicago Short Film Brigade.

The brigade will bring regular showings to Dubuque as well and other Midwestern cities.

Bird, whose mother is Galena, Ill., artist Beth Bird, will perform at 7:30 p.m. at the warehouse, 10th and Jackson streets. Admission is \$15 for the screening and concert.

Xan Aranda, of Chicago, who is curator of the film brigade, said the films are from all over the world: Seattle and Los Angeles, as well as Switzerland, Japan and Lebanon.

"The goal is to make short films available to people who might not get a chance to see them," she said. "These days you can see film on your iPod, but we're all about the warm social environment."

The event at Voices is part of a tour that includes Cedar Rapids, Madison and Minneapolis. It will introduce the film brigade as an ongoing series, which will return to Dubuque in early February.

Regular showings will be scheduled at Isabella's in the Ryan House. Filmmakers, Aranda said, are excited about their work being seen in Chicago and then at smaller Midwestern "just folks" venues.

Information about the group is available at www.filmbrigade.com.

"We'll have 10 films," Aranda said. "There will be animation, documentaries, experimental, vintage - a real variety. Short films can be excruciating but some are magical."

She said the regular admission fee is to be announced, but promised that it will be "cheaper than a burrito."

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