

Student film fest has wide appeal



Staff photo Rob Beintema

Promoting this weekend's *Speak Up! 2008 Film Festival* are, from left, festival Director & Founder Giselle Acosta, volunteer Natalie Choy and Elizabeth Agudelo Rodriguez, the volunteer coordinator.

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By: Chris Clay

July 17, 2008 10:06 AM - Apparently, organizers of this weekend's second annual *Speak Up! Student Short Film and Video Fest* did one heck of a job promoting the festival.

After all, they've got filmmakers from as far away as Texas making the trek to Mississauga to be part of the event, which takes place Saturday at the Living Arts Centre.

Texan director Sean Broadbent is coming to the festival to screen his film, *A Murder of Crows*. In addition to the international directors, local filmmakers Daniel Acosta, Sid Sawant, Morgan Muscat and Samuel Burrows will all be showing movies at the festival.

Speak Up! is designed to showcase films by high school, college and university students as well as promote, celebrate and advance filmmaking in the city and surrounding areas, said festival director Giselle Acosta. "The festival is really here to represent students and ensure their voices are heard," said Acosta. "The film industry is really tough to get into. In school, students work so hard and treat their films as so important. We provide an outlet for them to come and show their movies and enjoy a sense of community."

The goal of most aspiring filmmakers is to have their work viewed by an audience, and getting into some movie festivals can be tricky.

"I've had a few friends try other festivals and they had a real hard time getting in, especially because they're so expensive," said Acosta. "(With no entry fee) we cater to the filmmaker who eats Kraft Dinner for lunch each day."

The 11 films being screened cover a variety of genres and subjects, including animation, documentary, drama, comedy and music video. Films being shown are *Operation: Edu-Bot*, *The Adventures of Ratman*, *Academia*, *My Cue/Lyrical Storm*, *A Murder of Crows*, *Pick Me Up*, *Tyler*, *Tix and Tox*, *Title Match*, *Artistic Expression* and *Broken Lines*.

Following the screenings, which start at 7 p.m. and are expected to run about 90 minutes, there will be an awards presentation. Awards include the Light & Frame Visionary Award, Hear it Loud! Best Sound Track Award, Doc it Up! Documentary Award, Make it Move! Animation Award, Playback Magazine Film of the Year Award, Royal LePage SFX Award and the People's Choice Award.

Tickets cost \$9 and \$10. Call 905-306-6000.

Acosta said some of the films contain mature subject matter and viewer discretion is advised.

For more information, visit www.speakup.spacekidproductions.com.
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