You can come see one film or stay to see them all at the seventh annual Monadnock International Film Festival.

Thirty-four films were chosen from 130 submissions to this year’s event, opening next Friday, April 26, and closing Sunday, April 28 with screenings at The Colonial Theatre and Keene State College’s Putnam Theatre as well as The Peterborough Community Theatre. Keene Cinemas is a new venue in the festival line-up this year.

Of that 34 films, 21 are feature films (the most ever shown at the festival) and 13 are short films. Together, they come from 13 countries. A record number of 16 guests and filmmakers will attend the festival this year to participate in panel discussions and Q&A sessions.

“They are flying here from San Francisco, Chicago, New York — we’re very excited about that,” said film festival executive director, Dianna Costello. “Hopefully that’s why people go to film festivals to interact with (filmmakers). That’s what makes it special.”

While a theme isn’t followed in planning the festival, often one emerges — last year it was films addressing the global refugee immigration crisis. This year, Costello said, there are several in the line-up highlighting stories of the Holocaust and genocide.

Keene State College’s Cohen Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies will present four films at this year’s festival. The first is “Who Will Write our History?” — the story of a group of journalists, scholars and community leaders living in the Warsaw Ghetto in Poland during World War II decided to fight back against the Nazis with pen and paper.

“They recorded their history in case they didn’t survive,” said Costello. “After the war when buildings were being excavated, a treasure trove of documents was found.”

Dr. Hank Knight, director of the Cohen Center, will lead a discussion after the screening. Any student with a valid ID can attend this and any other screening at the Putnam Theatre during the festival.

Winner of Spain’s prestigious Goya award for Best Documentary Feature, “The Silence of Others” outlines the 40-year dictatorship of General Franco in Spain and attempts by those who took over the government after his death to cover up his crimes.

“A group of activists in Spain decided they won’t let this be buried,” said Costello. “They went to Argentina to find a lawyer and sue the government of Spain.”

Leading the post-screening discussion will be Keene State faculty Emily Robins Sharpe, who is writing a book about the Spanish Civil War; and Dr. Lisa Di Giovanni, who focuses her research on rep-
presentations of war, dictatorial violence and genocide in 21st-century Spain and Latin America.

“On Her Shoulders” follows the life of 23-year-old Nadia Murad, 2018 Nobel Peace Prize winner who survived the 2014 genocide of the Yazidis in Northern Iraq and escaped the hands of ISIS. She gave testimony before the U.N., visited refugee camps, met one-on-one with top government officials and conducted interviews with the media to tell the story of her people.

“She made it her mission to go around the world and bring this horrible crime to public attention,” said Costello of Murad, who caught the attention of actor George Clooney’s wife, Amal, a Lebanese-British barrister who connected Murad to the U.N. The film, shown at the Colonial Theatre, is presented by the Cohen Center’s student group.

The fourth film presented by the Cohen Center is “The Bird Catcher,” based on true events that happened during the Nazi occupation of Norway during World War II, when a young Jewish woman and her family were arrested and she escaped from a truck that was bringing them to a camp. She was befriended by a boy her age who housed her at his family farm, where she disguises herself as a boy.

Lisa Black, the film’s producer’ and Brandi Savitt, executive producer, will lead a Q&A with the audience after the Saturday afternoon screening at The Colonial.

Costello listed several light-hearted comedies in the festival schedule she’s excited about. One is “Woman at War,” from Iceland, about a woman in her mid-50s who’s a choir teacher by day and environmental activist by night.

“It’s a comedy/drama that’s quirky and funny but gets its message across about climate change,” she said.

“Ghost Light,” billed a “supernatural comedy,” starring Cary Elwes and Shannyn Sossamon as well as an ensemble cast featuring Carol Kane, presents the seriously-regarded superstitions of the theater world surrounding production of Shakespeare’s “Macbeth.”

“They rent a theater in a barn in the country in New England and a curse is activated,” said Costello.

Producer Geoffrey Taylor, of Concord, Mass., will bring one of the actors along to participate on the dramatic film panel after the Friday afternoon screening at The Colonial.

Keene Cinemas will be showing two animated feature films at no charge on Sunday morning: “Boy and the World,” an Academy Award nominee from Brazil; and “Spirited Away,” an Academy Award winner from Japan.

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Karaoke Night, 7 p.m., Willie Mac's, 401 Winchester St., Keene. Tracy Gunn, 499-8156.

**Ensemble Recital Series,** “An Evening in Paris,” 7:30 p.m., Redfern Center, Keene State College, 90 Wyman Way, Keene. 358-2168, boxoffice@keene.edu.

*Mama's Broke House Concert,* powerful folk duo, $10, 8 p.m., Rebop Farm, 1320 Sunset Lake Road, Brattleboro. Ashlyn Bristle, 802-365-1974, rebopfarm@gmail.com.

Open Mic, 8:30 p.m., Harlow’s Pub, 3 School St., Peterborough.

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**ETC.**

Leadership Circle, program designed to develop business leaders in Monadnock Region, chance to share experiences, ask for guidance, learn new skills, 8 a.m., The Hannah Grimes Center, 25 Roxbury St., Keene.

**Vernal Pool Hike,** moderately-strenuous, 1.2-mile round trip hike to hilltop vernal pool at Horatio Colony Nature Preserve, meet at preserve parking lot on Daniels Hill Road in Keene at 1 p.m., back by 3 p.m. Brett Amy Thelen, thelen@harriscenter.org, 358-2065.

**Advanced Pivot Tables and Pivot Charts,** with Melissa Binder, 3:30 p.m., The Hannah Grimes Center, 25 Roxbury St., Keene.

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**THURSDAY 25**

**FOOD**

Free Community Supper, come one, come all, 5:30 p.m., United Church of Jaffrey Parish Hall, 54 Main St., Jaffrey info@jaffreychamber.com.

**MUSIC**

Open Mic, open mic for musicians, call 802-257-7563 or stop by to sign up, 6 p.m., The Marina, 28 Spring Tree Road, Brattleboro. 802-257-7563.

Open Mic, 7 p.m., Willie Mac’s, 401 Winchester St., Keene.

**Tom from Young Folk,** 7 p.m., Cooper’s Hill Public House, 6 School St., Peterborough.

**Ensemble Recital Series,** $5/students and seniors, $10/adult, 7:30 p.m., Redfern Center, Keene State College, 90 Wyman Way, Keene.

**Jazz is Phish,** 8 p.m., The Stone Church, 210 Main St., Brattleboro.

**Fantastic Partnerz,** 8:30 p.m., Whetstone Station Restaurant and Brewery, 36 Bridge St., Brattleboro.

**Songs of Old New Hampshire,** featuring folklorist Jeff Warner, 7 p.m., Third Congregational Church, 14 River St., Alstead.

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**ETC.**

**Bingo,** 6 p.m., Compass School, 7892 Route 5, Westminster, Vt. Eric Rhomberg, 802-463-2525, eric.rhomberg@compass-school.org.

**Portraits and Punch,** share healthy benefits of elderberry juice, while having portrait drawn, free, open to all, 10 a.m., Westminster West Public Library, 3409 Westminster West Road, Westminster West, Vt. 802-387-4682, plwminsterw@vals.state.vt.us.

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That afternoon at Keene Cinemas will be a ticketed screening of “Bathtubs Over Broadway,” Steve Young’s film about the hidden world of industrial musicals. Young, a comedy writer most notable for “Late Night with David Letterman,” tracked down rare soundtrack albums of musicals produced by businesses large and small to boost employee morale.

Many actors, including Martin Short, who is interviewed in the film, got their start here. The film highlights the unlikely friendships Young formed on his quest to find these albums, which are highly collectible. Young will be on-hand for a Q&A after the screening as well as a signing of his coffee table book on the subject.

The final Sunday screening at Keene Cinemas is “Champions,” from Spain, the story of a professional basketball coach sentenced to community service working with a team of intellectually-disabled players.

This year’s winner of the festival’s annual Jonathan Daniels Award is “Grit,” which explores an environmental disaster in Indonesia in 2006 when 60,000 villagers were displaced and 16 were killed when they were buried by feet of hot mud unleashed by a gas and oil exploration company’s drilling in the area.

“A mother and daughter became activists and have had to lead the fight for retribution and compensation ever since (the disaster),” said Costello.

Former NHPR journalist Virginia Prescott will return from her current post at Atlanta Public Radio to conduct an on-stage interview with co-directors Sasha Friedlander and Cynthia Wade and a documentary panel prior to the Saturday evening screening at The Colonial.

As always, there are lots of events and festivities planned along with film screenings and panels during the festival including parties, red carpet events and awards (including audience choice awards). The Best of the Fest event returns Sunday afternoon at Peterborough Community Theater, during which viewers can rate films.

Again this year, festival-goers will be able to purchase single tickets for events such as receptions, after-parties and the Sunday filmmakers brunch. In the past, these events have only been open to VIP pass holders. Tickets to individual films will also be available for purchase.

“People don’t realize they can buy one ticket to one movie — a lot think you have to buy a pass,” said Costello. “We do have various levels. We’re trying to make (the festival) as accessible as possible to a lot of people.”

The goal of the Monadnock International Film Festival has always been to celebrate diversity through film and films that tackle important social issues have been the tradition. This year, the festival tagline, Travel the World With MONIFF, expands on this idea.

“(The festival) bring films from all over the world to the region people wouldn’t normally see,” said Costello.

The seventh annual Monadnock International Film Festival opens Friday, April 26, and runs through Sunday, April 28. Visit moniff.org for info on festival passes, tickets, and the program schedule.

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