

Finnish *Midwife* breaks local box-office records

by Jorn Rossing Jensen

29/09/2015 - Antti J Jokinen's third feature, which won the Best Actress Award at Shanghai, has recorded the best Finnish opening for a domestic drama



The Midwife by Antti J Jokinen

Finnish director **Antti J Jokinen**'s *The Midwife* [+], adapted from Katja Kettu's 2011 novel, broke box-office records when it was released in Finland by Nordisk Film. The film, which registered the best September opening and the best opening for a domestic drama, has after three weeks reached 158,969 admissions, to become this year's third best-performing local entry on the charts.

Starring **Krista Kosonen** and **Tommi Korpela**, with **Lauri Tilkanen**, *The Midwife* follows "the impossible love story" of Finnish midwife Helena, nicknamed Wildeye, and German Nazi officer Johannes Angelhurst in 1944, during the Lapland War of 1944-1945 between Finland and Germany in the aftermath of World War 2. The settings are the Titovka prison camp in Petsamo and the remote Dead Man's Fjord in the Arctic Ocean. "I think *The Midwife* has the feel and complexity of a big drama film," said Jokinen, who also depicts the inhumane treatment of the prisoners of war: Operation 1005, the experiments conducted on the prisoners, and their harsh everyday life in the prison.

Jokinen, who entered the East Carolina University in the US on a basketball scholarship, graduated with a major in Broadcast and Film, later returning to Finland to set up the leading film production company Solar Films with **Markus Selin**. After directing numerous music videos and episodes of TV series, he signed his first feature, *The Resident* [+], starring **Hilary Swank** and **Jeffrey Dean Morgan**, in 2011. His second effort, *Purge* [+] (2013), based on Sofi Oksanen's novel, received five Jussis, Finland's national film prize, and was submitted for the Oscar nominations.

At this year's Shanghai International Film Festival, Kosonen was awarded Best Actress for her *The Midwife* performance; the **Jukka Helle-Selin** production for Solar Films was also selected for the Focus on World Cinema section at Montreal and will continue on to the markets in Busan (1-10 October), Rome (16-24 October) and the American Film Market (Santa Monica, 4-11 November) for Berlin's Picture Tree International, which is handling international sales.