

**A true story about the unreal life
of the world's best ski-jumper ever**

**AN ALL TIME
RECORD
BREAKING
BOX OFFICE HIT!**

Solar Films presents an Aleksi Mäkelä Film a Markus Selin Production

MAIII

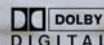
HELL IS FOR HEROES



SOLAR FILMS
INC.



BIRCH TREE ENTERTAINMENT



Selected cast

Matti **JASPER PÄÄKKÖNEN**
Nick Nevada **PETER FRANZÉN**
Taina **ELINA HIETALA**
Mirva **ELINA KNIHTILÄ**
Maisteri **JUHA VEIJONEN**
Oksanen **JOPE RUONANSUU**
Hammer **KARI HIETALAHTI**
Ylianttila **TONI WAHLSTRÖM**
Nipa **JANI VOLANEN**
Jorma Tapio **JUSSI LAMPI**

Selected technical credits

Director **ALEKSI MÄKELÄ**
Producer **MARKUS SELIN**
Executive producer **JUKKA HELLE**
Production manager **SIRKKA RAUTIAINEN**
Screenwriter **MARKO LEINO**
Director of photography **PINI HELLSTEDT**
Sound designer **JYRKI RAHKONEN**
Production designers **JUSSI HALONEN / PETRI NEUVONEN**
Costume designer **TIINA KAUKANEN**
Editor **KIMMO TAAVILA**
Composer **TUOMAS KANTELINEN**
Key make-up artist **MARI VAALASRANTA**
Location manager **KIMI SEPPÄNEN**
Marketing producer **JUSSI LEPISTÖ**
Publicity **RAMPE TOIVONEN**

Production company **SOLAR FILMS INC. OY**
Principal photography **8.3. – 1.4. 2005 and 4.7. – 19.8. 2005**
Premiere date **13.1.2006**
Distributor **Buena Vista International Finland**
Supporting TV channel **MTV3, Finland**
Total budget **1,6 million E**
Funding by Finnish Film Foundation **500 000 E**
The production has also been funded by EU Media Programme.

35 mm / colour / 2.35:1 / Dolby Digital / 135 min.



MATTI

A fictionalized tragi-comedy about the unreal life of a real person.

MOTTO: LIFE IS THE BEST TIME FOR A MAN

Matti is a fictionalized drama about a man who loves ski-jumping so much that he rises to the top of his game and becomes the best in the world.

But the fact that he jumps like an eagle flies, does not mean that he cannot crash-land in everyday life. Matti stumbles, falls and hurts himself time after time but miraculously struggles back to his feet after every episode – and soon is ready for another foolhardy and pre-doomed leap.

The movie cruises back and forth in time from the mid-eighties to present day.

At the peak of his career the ski-jumper is transformed into an entertainment artist and the publicity spotlight illuminates the underside of his public role more and more frequently.

The Matti of the movie provides a commentary on his own life but the format does not offer him the benefit of hindsight – so spectators can form their own opinions about Matti's trajectory over time.

The road from nationally adulated athlete to grubby tabloid regular is basically a tragic story. But not even the real Matti Nykänen himself can – or will – deny the comic aspects of his various mishaps.

"I have often hoped that I could be a normal John Doe – and that people would treat me as one. But I guess that I set my goals above average in my athletic life. And I guess I will have to see out that role to the end."
(Matti Nykänen)

AN ATHLETE AND A HELL-RAISER

As a ski-jumper, Matti Nykänen won everything possible during his career – and more: four Olympic gold medals, seven World Championship titles, four World Cup tour championships and 46 individual World Cup circuit victories.

Because of his unbeaten athletic achievements, Nykänen became a revered hero world-wide, and one whose scandalous escapades in both his private and professional lives were hushed up for a long time. Only after his athletic career came to an end, the other side of the hero emerged into public view in all of its vulgarity: an alcohol dependency, repeated marital problems, petty crime, uncontrolled acts of violence with knives and fists, money hungry hangers-on... Wherever Matti Nykänen roams, drama and catastrophe dog his tracks. And everything is there in the headlines the following day.

Producer **Markus Selin**
(born 16.3.1960 in Helsinki)

"The movie *Matti* was made because it's a story worth telling. It is also important that Matti Nykänen himself will benefit from its making. He has been ripped off so many times over the years.

The emphasis of the movie is on his career as an athlete but it does, of course, include events and perceptions from present time.

The publicity surrounding the movie does not much affect me though I try to learn from criticism and I do respect the opinion of the audiences.

This movie should not provoke major controversy, except among the really fanatic. The point-of-view is neutral, so, depending on your own interpretation, the story may be that of a sad little boy or an incurable loser. Or something in between.

Whichever, one thing can be certain: there will be no sequels."

A BOX OFFICE PRODUCER

The most successful producer in the recent re-birth of popular Finnish cinema, Markus Selin has been behind the movies of Aleksi Mäkelä since 1994. The son of a movie theatre owner himself, Selin has literally absorbed movies since his early childhood.

Selin's career as a movie producer started in the mid-eighties when he and young Renny Harlin made an international adventure thriller entitled *Born American*. Because of its anti-Soviet views during a time of extreme political sensitivity, the movie had to be put on hold by local censorship for over a year.

Since then, largely thanks to Aleksi Mäkelä, Selin has reached a domestic audience of 3 million spectators in Finnish movie theaters.

Selin was chosen Finnish producer of the year in 1999. He has won the Finnish 'most successful movie' audience poll five times and his movies have collected 10 Finnish Movie Awards.

Selin works as a producer in Solar Films, the company he founded in 1995. Under his management, the company has become the leading production company in Finland in the fields of drama and entertainment.



Movies produced
by Markus Selin:

Matti, 2006
Eleven Men Out, Iceland, 2005
Frozen Land, 2005
Popular Music, Sweden/
Finland, 2004
Vares, Private Eye, 2004
Addiction, 2004
Bad Boys, 2003
Me and Morrison, 2001
The South, 2000
Restless, 2000
The Tough Ones, 1999
Sunset Riders, 1994
Born American, 1985

Finnish Movie Awards to movies
produced by Markus Selin:

Vares, Private Eye: best editing,
Kimmo Taavila
Bad Boys: best photography,
Pini Hellstedt, best sound
design, Jyrki Rahkonen
Me and Morrison: best actress,
Irina Björklund
The South: best actress,
Outi Mäenpää
Restless: best score,
Leri Leskinen, best editing,
Samu Heikkilä
The Tough Ones: best actor in a
supporting role, Kalevi Haapoja
Sunset Riders: best direction,
Aleksi Mäkelä, best actor,
Juha Veijonen

Director **Alexsi Mäkelä**
(born 20.11.1960 in Helsinki)

"I've tried to treat *Matti* with a light touch, without being too serious. Our goal was not to construct a statue. The slogan of the movie: "*Life is the best time for a man*" is supposed to be from his mouth. If someone else had said it, it might something framed in all the high schools in Finland.

The narrator of the movie is the Matti character who, from the perspective of the present, looks back on his life and all its adventures and mishaps. The story is told through flashbacks. I don't know if Matti has gotten any wiser or even learned anything during the years but at least he has thought about things and is aware of those places where he went wrong. I believe that the movie answers some questions. I am already looking forward to my next movie, *Vares 2*, which will be out in a year."

A DIRECTOR FOR BIG AUDIENCES

A self-taught movie director, Aleksi Mäkelä is the most successful of the modern era Finnish directors: the total domestic audience of his movies in theatrical release is 1,3 million.

The Tough Ones (1999) was one of the initiators of the recent ascent of Finnish cinema, with an audience of 330,000.

The biggest domestic box office hit since the eighties, *Bad Boys*, drew a phenomenal audience of 615,000 in only 5 months. After that, *Vares*, *Private Eye* was also the number one domestic movie of its release year 2004.

Regardless of the genre, the common factors in Mäkelä's movies are a masculine point-of-view, fast-paced action and a boyish sense of humor.

Matti is his seventh feature film. His debut *The Romanov Stones* was released in 1993. Besides movies, Mäkelä has directed hundreds of hours of TV series, commercials and music videos. He resides in Nummela, 40 km outside Helsinki.



Movies directed
by Aleksi Mäkelä:

Matti, 2006
Vares, **Private Eye**, 2004
Bad Boys, 2003
The South, 2000
There's a Satan in the House,
TV, 1999
The Tough Ones, 1999
Sunset Riders, 1994
The Romanov Stones, 1993
I Was Just About to Leave, tv,
1990
1249 km, **TV**, 1989

Finnish Movie Awards of movies
directed by Aleksi Mäkelä (8):

Vares: best editing,
Kimmo Taavila
Bad Boys: best photography,
Pini Hellsted, best sound design,
Jyrki Rahkonen
The South: best actress,
Outi Mäenpää
The Tough Ones: best actor in a
supporting role, Kalevi Haapoja
Sunset Riders: best direction,
Aleksi Mäkelä, best actor,
Juha Veijonen
The Romanov Stones: best
sound design, Paul Jyrälä



The mind play between two friends that turned into a movie.

Director Aleksi Mäkelä and actor Jasper Pääkkönen were traveling and working abroad together in the falls of both 2001 and 2003, and because of the similar circumstances, similar discussions took place on both occasions. The topic was a movie about notorious Finnish ski jumper Matti Nykänen, and in the director's mind, Pääkkönen, who came up with the idea, even started to look like Matti. The two friends were in Germany when the idea finally germinated, and they promptly took a flight to the south of France to meet up with Finnish producer Markus Selin, who was visiting the location of his Finnish version of *Joe Millionaire*. They met Selin in Cannes, sat down in the middle of a shoot and asked: "Can we make a movie about Matti Nykänen?"

After a brief moment of hesitation Selin answered: "If you still think it's a good idea in the morning, why not?" The producer was a man of his word. The contract between Matti Nykänen and Selin's production company was signed the following day. That gave the project a jump start and it was up and running until unexpected trouble hit it the following summer; after months of preparation and work, the screenwriter departed the project and left the table bare.

MARKO LEINO TO THE RESCUE.

Fortunately, screen writer Marko Leino agreed to join the project in the fall of 2004 and saved the day, picking up the pieces and continuing to develop the screenplay. He and director Mäkelä discovered an immediate rapport and from that point the production forged unstoppably ahead towards its premiere. Jasper Pääkkönen, a young and gifted actor, transforms himself down to the smallest details of look and gesture into Matti Nykänen, the screenplay's central character and someone hugely familiar to the Finnish public. All the actors are similarly astonishing in their roles. Imagination, fact, legend and gossip are here potently blended into a powerful drama involving so many actual events that it is impossible to separate reality from fiction.

That's something for audiences to argue about after seeing the movie.

And, says director Mäkelä: "Sometimes we've had to re-compose the truth to keep the movie believable!"



Screenwriter **Marko Leino**
(born 8.9.1967 in Hyvinkää)



Movie scripts written
by Marko Leino:

Vares 2 (2007)

A Christmas Story (2007)

Matti (2006)

Me and Morrison (2002)

6 published novels, several
awards in writing contests

"To me, Matti Nykänen primarily represents a sports hero. Not even the mishaps that happened during or after his career will ever wipe out that fact. All of my literary production so far, whether it is a play, movie script or a novel, is based on research into characters who are wrestling with themselves, who have broken down or are just about to break down. I often deal with the toughest problems and most acute pain using the tool of humor, sometimes very black humor.

The screenplay of *Matti* is a logical continuation of my work.

The easiest part was the background research because Matti has been in the public eye for a quarter of a century and has kept a legion of journalists in employment. The most challenging part was the structure of the screenplay: how to make a story that is already familiar to most of us exciting? In the end I decided to break the narrative by creating most of the scenes as flashbacks.

In the very last stage I added the voice-over. It has a very important role and it brings Matti closer to the audience. Without that, without his continuous commentary on himself, the mood of the movie would be completely different.

Had he always been as immaculate and skillful in his civilian life as he was at his sport, this movie would not have been made. There is nothing interesting in a perfect, unflawed hero. It is the vulnerability and the weakness of the character that makes the hero interesting, and human to all of us."

Director of Photography **Pini Hellstedt**
(born 24.5.1963 in Helsinki)



"*Matti* was shot on film because a movie should be shot on film stock. The resolution of film stock is still better than High Definition format. Also, the digital formats lack the warmth that is characteristic of film stock. As the director wanted to use slow motion, shooting on film was luckily our only choice. Slow motion on video formats is not possible.

The next generation HD-format camera will make the traditional film camera extinct in ten years. The same thing will happen that happened with LP records: only the true die-hard fanatics will continue to use film stock.

The pictorial narrative in *Matti* is very traditional. It is a simplified portrait of a person and the contemporary moments are stylized a little. We had to invoke a sensation of continual vertigo. I wasn't crazy about the subject to start with but after reading the screenplay, it was a real pleasure to work with this production. Usually the first assembly is a very tedious, boring experience but this one got me hooked immediately. I haven't felt this strong before, not even when I saw the rough cut of *Bad Boys*."

Movies shot by Pini Hellstedt:

Matti (2006), **Girl, You Are a Star** (2005), **Vares**, **Private Eye** (2004), **Bad Boys** (2003) Finnish Film Award for Best Photography, **Rölli and the Spirit of the Forest** (2001) Finnish Film Award for Best Photography, **The South** (2000), **The Call of The Open** (2000), **The Tough Ones** (1999), **Going to Kansas City** (1998), **The Redemption** (1997), **Sunset Riders** (1994)

TV Series:

NDA (2005), **The Rascals** (2003/1994) **Lost and Found** (2004/2002/1999), **Trabant Express** (1998)



Movies featuring
Jasper Pääkkönen:

Matti (2006)

Frozen Land (2005)

Vares, Private Eye (2004)

Bad Boys (2003)

**The Beauty And Misery of
Human Life** (1988)

TV series

A Beautiful Man (2003),

Fragments (2003),

Secret Lives (1999-2001)

Jasper Pääkkönen (Matti) (born 15.7.1980 in Helsinki)

"This project has been very important for me as I was there with Aleksi since the very beginning. When I finally got the shooting script in my hands, I was very relieved. It had been a long road and a bumpy ride.

My character is an actor's interpretation – I have never met the real Matti. We stayed away from direct imitation. But I did watch some stock footage, talk shows and so on. I hope there is a bridge between the character and the real person – that at least was our goal. The original idea was to be in athletic shape for the winter shoot and then gain weight and blubber for the summer shoot. It didn't work quite like that because in the end we didn't shoot in continuity and we had to use a lot of makeup gimmicks.

A lot of people have asked me about the scenes featuring ski-jumping and how we shot them. The answer is the same here as it will always be: it's up to the viewer to decide! We knew that ski-jumping was hard and I had to take a couple of courses. They were conducted on small hills and we used the v-style. After that, a big hill with the traditional style was frightening as hell. My greatest fear was coming down ass first. But at the end of the day, I was able to jump 80–90 meters. Not bad, eh?

I don't care what Nykänen might say, I think I jumped pretty well. I only crashed once – and even that was well after landing."

The Finnish Shooting Star 2006

European Film Promotion (EFP) nominated Jasper Pääkkönen as the Finnish Shooting Star 2006 introducing Europe's new acting talents at Berlin International Film Festival (February 9–19)





Peter Franzén

(Nick Nevada)

(born 14.8.1971 in Keminmaa)



Movies featuring

Peter Franzén:

Matti (2006)

Red Is the Colour of
(USA/2005)

Popular Music

(Sweden/Finland 2004)

Tänä öösel me ei maga

(Estonia/2004)

Mélyen örzött titkok

(Hungary/2004)

The Dog Nail's Cutter (2004)

- Finnish Movie Award for
Best Role

Hotet (Sweden/2004)

Rånarna (Sweden/20003)

Bad Boys (2003)

Honey Baby (2003)

The Names Carved in Marble

(Estonia/2003)

Lovers and Leavers (2002)

Röllli and the Spirit of the

Forest (2001)

On the Road to Emmaus (2001)

The Kites Above Helsinki (2001)

Bad Luck Love (2000)

Badding (2000)

The Crime and Punishment

(1999)

The Ambush (1999)

The Train Birds (1998)

The Lumberjack King

- Finnish Movie Award for Best
Supporting Role

The Benefactors (1997)

Into a Lady's Heart (1996)

Sour and Sweet (1995)

The Death of a Cat (1994)

"When the director asked me for the role of Nick Nevada in *Matti*, I was pretty flattered. We had become good friends during the shoot of *Bad Boys*".

Aleksi's vision of Nick was of such a slimy character that no one in their right mind would really want to be such a prick. But the character had to be believable enough for the audiences to be able to identify with him. Creating this kind of character was a very enjoyable process.

The first key to Nick's look was the hairdo. I said to Aleksi that an afro-style creation on the head of this slimebag might work. He immediately thought about *Carlito's Way*, where Sean Penn sports a disgusting curly wig. I've heard that Penn personally thinned it out a bit by hand.

We decided on a thicker wig which looked and acted like a rat – just like the character wearing it.

A makeup artist called Riikka Virtanen manufactured a weasely looking wig and our makeup artist on the set, Mari, carefully installed it on my head every morning. As an actor, I've met people like Nick, who pretend to be sympathetic and supportive. And I hope that it helped me to create some of the enigmatic appeal of the slimebags-who-pretend-to-be-your-best-friend-types and I hope it shows on the screen.

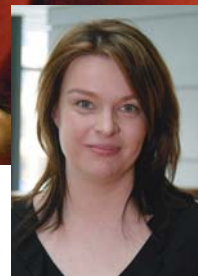
Most of my scenes were with Matti alias Jasper. He produced a fantastic, strong performance which is the most powerful of his career so far.

We often had hysterically funny times in our mutual scenes – but they were also deeply tragic. Exactly like the life of the real Matti."





Elina Knihtilä (*Mirva*)
(born 6.6.1971 in Valkeala)



The relationship between Mirva and Matti is one of love but also dependency. Two lonely and unhappy people meet each other and recognize their mirror images. The love they share is genuine, not exploitation. Or at least I'd like to think so.

Of course, I've read the newspapers and magazines and via the articles, followed their lives. There are bits you can take from there but it's not the only basis for building a character. I hope that the role model for my character understands that the movie is fictional.

Mirva is a supporting character and we only get to see the side of her life that's connected to Matti. The scenes are loud and over-the-top, of course. There isn't one scene where she's totally sober. She is either on her way up, down or hungover.

The amount of publicity connected to my role has taken me by surprise. I knew that people would be interested but I wasn't prepared for the mayhem. The publicity is intimidating but also appealing.

Thank God, I'm not so interesting that I'll remain at the mercy of the publicity after this role."

Movies featuring
Elina Knihtilä:

Matti (2006)
**Children And Adults
– And How They Are
Made** (2004)
**Without Breathing,
Without Laughing**
(2002)
The Benefactors (1997)

Several roles in TV and
on stage

Elina Hietala
(*Taina*)
(born 19.5.1981
in Kokkola)



"I was studying in the theatre college when I was cast as Taina, based on my performance in the audition. Up until this, I've only had one tiny role in "*Eila* 2003".

I did my background research and prepared for the part by studying old pictures and magazines. I was looking for the style. Besides that, my base was the screenplay.

When Taina meets Matti, she's a girl-next-door type, not too bright. She is very naïve to begin with but finds character and temper inside herself over time.

Getting onto the bandwagon with Matti is a time of growth for Taina. She is forced to take responsibility and in the beginning she is able to influence Matti. But it's not long before she discovers that Matti is choosing his own paths and she can have no part in that.

Her affection for Matti is genuine; she is not impressed by his heroic achievements in sports. On the other hand, neither does she reject the fringe benefits that come with the package.

I understand that Taina still lives in the same block of flats in Kuopio where she once took refuge from him."

The Athletic Achievements of Matti Nykänen 1981-1991

OLYMPIC GAMES

4 Olympic Gold Medals 1984, 1988

1 Olympic Silver Medal 1984

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES

(7 Gold - 2 Silver - 6 Bronze)

5 Gold Medals 1982, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1989

1 Gold Medal, Flying Hill 1985

1 Gold Medal, youth 1981

1 Silver Medal, 1987

1 Silver Medal, Flying Hill 1987

3 Bronze Medals, 1982, 1985, 1989

3 Bronze Medals, Flying Hill 1983, 1986, 1988

WORLD CUP

4 World Cup overall victories 1983, 1985, 1986, 1988

1 World Cup overall second place 1984

46 individual victories 1982-1989

FOUR HILLS TOURNAMENT

2 overall victories 1982-83, 1987-88

FINNISH CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES

13 Gold Medals

2 Silver Medals

7 Bronze Medals

Total 22 Medals 1981-1991

'Sportsman of the Year' in Finland 1985 and 1988

FOREIGN SALES

Birch Tree Entertainment

Art Birzneck

7224 Plushstone St.

Las Vegas, NV 89148

Tel +1-310-383-2782

Fax +1-323-843-9650

mobile +1 604 7282 782

art@birchtreefilms.com

www.birchtreefilms.com

FESTIVAL CONTACTS

The Finnish Film Foundation

Kanavakatu 12

FI-00160 Helsinki

Tel +358 9 6220 300

Fax +358 9 6220 3060

ses@ses.fi

www.ses.fi

PRODUCTION

Solar Films Inc.

Markus Selin

Veneentekijäntie 20

FI-00210 Helsinki

Tel +358 9 417 44 700

Fax +358 9 417 44 744

Mobile +358 400 470 332

markus.selin@solarfilms.com

www.solarfilms.com



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INC.**

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