



Gold Futures Film Transcript

EUGEN CORNEA

I was born in Roșia Montană. I'm 53 years old. I am fighting to preserve this village, which according to documentary evidence is the oldest settlement in Romania.

We grew up together with our kids. We married young: 33 years ago. We were happy here in Roșia Montană. I spent my childhood and my schooldays here. We got married when we finished high school. We have 3 daughters.

MARIA CORNEA

My parents' name is Hungarian: Ravaj. My father and my uncle used to sing songs like this...

Beautiful is when one has the blue eyes. Mine are dark blue, - well, mine are actually green – but I am still not beautiful enough to my loved one. I'm loving, but not for marriage. I just want to steal your heart.

I translate it for you: I don't want to marry you, I just want to steal your heart. Then you can marry whoever you like.

EUGEN CORNEA

But I've already married you.

I worked as a topographer in the copper mine until the year 2000. I spent 30 years in the mine. I have a small farm with 3 cows, 2 calves, 14 sheep. My life has been peaceful, but ever since Gold Corporation arrived, it's been confused. It's turned me grey.

We are small, the company is big and powerful. This isn't a fair struggle. It's like David and Goliath. In their struggle, David triumphed over Goliath. We hope to be the David of the battle in Roșia Montană .

NARRATION

Since its founding almost 2000 years ago, the villagers of Roșia Montană , a small town in Transylvania, have been mining its mineral wealth.

In 1997, Goliath arrived.

At the time, gold sold for \$330 an ounce.

A Canadian based multinational, Gabriel Resources, plans to build the largest gold mine in Europe.



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Their subsidiary – Roșia Montană Gold Corporation – was granted a 20 year exploration license on the land, but first they would have to buy up hundreds of houses and displace almost the entire village.

MARIA PETRINCA
What about the orchard and the garden?

Laura, have they been to survey your place?

LAURA CIURA
They've surveyed here three times.

MARIA PETRINCA
Three times, already?

LAURA CIURA
Yes.

MARIA PETRINCA
I don't know what we'll do. If they start, it'll be bad for those who stay. But if they don't... The cyanide they use is highly toxic.

LAURA CIURA
We can't plan for the future. The situation keeps changing. There are rumors... I don't know what to do. Who knows when they will pay for the house? I don't know.

KÁLMÁN ZLACKI
I can't wait to get the money, so I can leave. It's too cold here, we have to run the heat seven months a year.

ESTER PITIE
I'll get more than €25,000 for my house. I've just bought a apartment in Spain, so I need the money.

Everything was ready, then somebody interferes. I don't want anybody to interfere. They don't want to leave? Let them stay here then.

FRANCISC DAVID
This is a miner's house. My ancestors lived here, and I live here now. It's six years since they began terrorizing us into moving.

First they came by helicopter. They wanted to buy everyone and everything, but we won't go for their money.



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IOAN COBORI

Relocate me, I don't care. I'm fed up with the bad roads. There's nothing left here. If there is no pharmacy, no doctor, no town hall or bakery, why should I stay? And the trucks' exhaust fumes? We're not headed for the Sahara, after all.

There's not even a market now. We used to have one. I used to go with my mother. There were so many people here. If I got lost I couldn't find her again. In those days this was the richest village.

[MUSIC]

HOREA MARCU

This was a little California.

IOAN COBORI

That's what it was... People took the gold from their mines to the bank, and there was still gold to spare.

These Canadians won't fool around. They'll bring strong machines, and experts... Roșia Montană won't exist in 30-40 years' time.

[MUSIC]

VASILE SZABO

Lots of different people lived here:

Germans, Hungarians, Romanians, Jews, French, and many others. We've always lived here and we hope to stay here. We should protect this community, so it doesn't vanish from Europe, from this country. We have children to raise. We aren't against the investment, but they should do it intelligently. We don't have to poison ourselves. Roșia Montană isn't an uninhabited desert. The problem is that people live here.

NARRATION

During the Communist era, Romanian mines employed many people, but after the revolution in 1989, the state-subsidized industry collapsed leading to widespread unemployment and poverty in mining villages.

As a result, about 2,800 people were laid off from the copper and gold mines in Roșia Montană .

Today, the unemployment rate in the region is 70%. But the Gold Corporation says it will return prosperity to the town.

ADRIAN DASCALU

Our project offers these people a job and a much more certain future. Our mine will create 540 jobs for the entire duration of the project, 17 years. And one mining job creates between 3 and 7 related jobs.



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JOHN ASTON

What we are planning to do is to redevelop the area with modern mining practice, modern environmental management. We plan to preserve the historic part of Roşia Montană . We plan to relocate and provide resettlement options for all people living in this area that will be impacted by the mine that's underneath the adjacent valley.

There are approximately 900 households. There is a lot of gold but a lot of gold means a big mine. And it will be the biggest gold mine in Europe. The mine will last for approximately 17 years. That's based on a known reserve of over 300 tons of gold and 1,600 tons of silver. At today's price that's worth a lot of money. And that is in fact the engine behind the whole project.

Mining has got a very bad reputation but this is one of the very few mines which would actually improve the environment. People find it very, very hard to believe. This is true. This project will end up putting money into the local area that will help. The taxes will help people build and improve the local roads. Local people will be building restaurants and hotels. Already, there are new restaurants in the area.

At the end of the day you will have an environmentally friendly area.

NARRATION

Until 2006, the state operated one of the country's last gold mines in Roşia Montană .

The extraction techniques for Gold Corporation's proposed mine will be similar to those used here, but on a much larger scale. Also, for the first time on this site, cyanide will be used to process the ore.

Miners will use dynamite to blast the rock into manageable pieces, leveling the mountain as the excavation progresses.

JOHN ASTON

The stones will be broken down, ground into a very fine sand and then they will go through a process in a factory which has got cyanide in it. And cyanide actually takes the gold out of the rock, out of the sand and the waste product goes in Corna Valley. There's going to have a very large dam here made of rock.

NARRATION

The dam will be twice the height of the Statue of Liberty, and the resulting holding pond Roşia Montană's neighboring valley, Corna.

REMUS CELUSA



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It's as quiet as a monastery here in the middle of the valley. It's so beautiful here. I'm not going. I've worked here so long I can't quit now. Money is their problem. What'll I do with the money? Money ruins everything.

My name is Remus Celusa. I'm 49. I was born here in Corna. I married a local girl, we bought this house, here and started this little business that you can see.

This is what we do. Look at that wainscoting... This beautiful furniture. We design furniture like this. Wainscoting, doors, windows, whatever's needed. We'd be sorry to have to leave our village.

On the radio they said that Roșia Montană is the new El Dorado. We have gold, there's gold in the mountains.

We're very afraid. Why can't they do this a different way? There must be a way of mining gold without destroying our mountains and everything we own.

I don't know what to play. I can't concentrate.

It's good.

STEPHANIE ROTH
Bravo. I love it when you play like that.

CELUSA REMUS
This is the best instrument.

STEPHANIE ROTH
My name is Stephanie, I am Swiss. I am 32 years old. and I came to Rosia Montana the first time in April 2002. And I saw this place and it broke my heart and I decided to stay here and to fight for this place to stay as it is.

RETEZA DRAGOMIR
I won't move because I'm old. Where would I go? To hell?

STEPHANIE ROTH
I have become a member of Alburnus Maior. Alburnus Maior is the local NGO in opposition to this gold mining project. It represents the interests of 300 subsistence farmers well opposed to the project and to forced resettlement.

NARRATION
Gold Corporation began buying out homeowners in 2002.



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The company offers either cash or a home in a new community it plans to build nearby. The Gold Corporation proposes a Protected Zone where some buildings, churches, and access to ancient and recent mine workings will be preserved because of architectural or historical merit.

Villagers can elect to stay, but if only a few remain, they will be surrounded by the new mine.

Gold Corporation created a community information center where local people can see the project plans and what sort of alternative housing the company is offering.

As of May 2007, almost two thirds of the village houses had been purchased or optioned.

ADRIAN DASCALU

We are closely monitoring the situation of those who left Rosia Montana. So far we've only had positive feedback. They've managed to buy comfortable apartments from the compensation packages offered by our company.

WOMAN

We've got nothing to complain about.

MAN

We got a good deal.

WOMAN

We'd never have gotten 40 million for our house.

MAN

It's a miracle. I bought an apartment for my daughter, a car for my son and a small house for ourselves.

WOMAN

As soon as I entered their office, I realized these people don't wish to harm me. I'd never return to Roşia Montană . I'll invite all the employees of Gold Corporation to my daughter's wedding. They're such lovely people.

IOAN DRAGAN

I'll cut their heads off. Absolutely. I mean it, with my scythe. I don't care. I've had to get it out a few times already.

ELENA DRAGAN

He asked the police to stop them from entering our property. Today you were at the police, but regardless tomorrow someone else will enter again.



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EUGEN CORNEA

It's psychological pressure to wear the people down.

IOAN DRAGAN

They demolish houses...to intimidate you.

The devil take them and their gold. Leave the gold here, in Europe. We need it, we're poor. Europeans are poor, too. Not like the Americans, they're up to here with money.

ELENA DRAGAN

We've raised our kids, and now these Canadian thieves want to evict us. Listen to what they say. "Don't go now when you could get money, you'll leave anyway. Even without the money."

EUGEN CORNEA

This is pressure.

EUGEN DAVID

When I moved here, it seemed our life would be happy because this place is so beautiful. I learned a few things during those 14 years in the mine, at Roşia Poieni open cast mine.

MIA DAVID

Diana, have you washed your hands? I'll get a towel.

EUGEN DAVID

My name is Eugen David, I'm chairman of the Alburnus Maior Association. I was among the first to oppose the project. We set up the association when we realized the danger. We wanted to protect our interests and make our voices heard at the local and national government level and other official forums.

To devote myself to the struggle I left my job.

Now I'm a farmer. I'd like to demonstrate that here, in these beautiful mountains, there are other ways to make a living besides mining. I want to live off this farm.

MEN

Who's the birthday boy? Hurray for Wili. Happy birthday.

WILHELM GRUBER

We've lived off the gold for 2000 years. Working these accursed seams. There must be a few million tons of gold,



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if, even after 2000 years the French, English and Canadians are still coming. This means there is gold.

Gold prospectors are coming. They only care about gold, not about the people or anything else. We look for gold because we need it.

Gold is the only source of income here. You can't live off rosehips, elderberries and sunflower seeds. That's not possible. There's no tourism. Who the hell would come here? But seriously.

We expect the project to bring investment and money. Let's see that something happens here. I'm looking forward to Gold Corporation's project.

NARRATION

Many villagers support the mining project because they see little possibility of finding work elsewhere. They formed Pro Roșia Montană , a group that claims 85% of the villagers are in favor of Gold Corporation's project. Their leader is local dentist Andrei Jurca.

ANDREI JURCA

Rodica, Have you got any bananas?

RODICA

No.

ANDREI JURCA

No, she has no bananas.

I believe I have a lot of credibility with the local people, because I helped them not only with medical problems, but I've helped them solve their economic and social problems like raising their children.

Through this NGO we wish to create a connection between the people and the management of the company. We have made huge sacrifices to make this project happen: so we could guarantee work for the local people, their daily bread, and a normal standard of living.

NARRATION

This is how Roșia Montană will look when it brings the work and the wages. This Roșia Poieni open pit copper mine once employed many locals. The proposed new gold mine will be even larger than this crater.



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EUGEN CORNEA

It has a circumference of over a mile, and a depth of 1000 feet. These steps are each 49 feet high, and 82 feet wide.

In order to mine 300 tons of ore, containing .05 ounces of gold and .25 to .46 ounces of silver per ton, four mountains must be destroyed in Rosia Montana.

While the Roşia Poieni mine was created on a hilltop, the planned mine in Rosia Montana will be placed exactly on top of the village. The gold will have to be mined from under our houses.

There are two churches down there. The Orthodox and the Greek Catholic.

We're here above Corna. This beautiful wooded valley will be flooded with the effluent of the cyanide treatment resulting from the Rosia Montana mine.

This will pollute this entire area of the Apuseni Mountains. It will endanger all rivers, the Abrud, and the Aries that flows into the Mures, then into the Tisza, the Danube, and on to the Black Sea.

What they want to do is extremely dangerous, because if the same thing happens in Roşia Montană that caused the accident in Baia Mare in 2000, the disaster will be 40 times greater. Forty times greater than the one on the Tisza river.

EMIL BOGAR

My name is Emil Bogar. I'm from a family of fishermen. I started fishing when I was 10 and continued for 70 years, except for my three years of military service.

I go every 2 or 3 days, to have a look, but unfortunately...

NARRATION

This is what Roşia Montană fears. In January 2000 the biggest environmental disaster in Europe since Chernobyl occurred in the Romanian city of Baia Mare.

Heavy rains and snowfall flooded a holding pond of mining waste, washing away the containing dam and spilling more than 20 million gallons of cyanide-laced sludge into the River Tisza.

Over 300 tons of dead and dying fish were hauled out to try and hasten the removal of cyanide from the ecosystem.

It was the region's largest economic and environmental disaster in living memory.



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FISHERMAN

The end of everything, of life as we know it. When will the balance be restored? Plant-eating fish, carnivorous fish, birds... A whole ecosystem, completely destabilized.

Destabilized? They wiped it out.

FISHERMAN

I'm 40 now. In 20 years I'll be 60. It'll be 20 years before I can catch fish like I did this summer.

NARRATION

The day after the spill, a high-level EU delegation arrived at Baia Mare to meet with the local community and hear their angry complaints about the Australian company that owned the mine.

FARMER

They promised to do surveys, but they did nothing. Where should we take the animals in winter?

FARMER

Nobody asks us anything, but we're here all the time, in this toxic environment.

OLD WOMAN

The Australian lied. He said it wouldn't harm the people. Look what he did. The cows are dead and the soil is spoiled. Take him away from here, make him go to his own country. Look at this sludge. All that water... He has no brain.

ADRIAN DASCALU

It's very clear that the first impulse of many people is to draw an analogy between the unfortunate event of Baia Mare and the technology that we're planning to use at Rosia Montana.

I would like to say it very clearly: There is no similarity between the technology used in Baia Mare and the technology we will use.

The cyanide content of the settling containers will be far below the limits allowed by the EU legislation. Since the technology we use is safe, and the environment will not be damaged. And it will certainly be possible for other industries such as tourism to develop.

NARRATION



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For centuries, churches have been a powerful presence in this remote Transylvanian village. Local religious leaders had not decided how to react to the project. They met with their congregations to discuss concerns.

GHEORGHE IVASCAN

We, the Christians, do not agree to having our church removed. Not for anything.

EUGEN DAVID

No one can tell me whether to sell my house or not. If our Orthodox priest wants to sell the church, then he can sell it. But there's no point in it, because the congregation won't follow him. Or they won't let him sell it.

OLD WOMAN

We pray in the church. We pray to Jesus and the Virgin Mary. We won't sell it. We won't sell it. We'd rather die here

ADRIAN DASCALU

We won't demolish a single church, but obviously, when the people leave the area, the churches will be left empty. And we'll build new churches in the new settlements, such as "Piatra Alba." I repeat, there will be no demolition.

REMUS CELUSA

I can't bear to leave our church, to just abandon it here. I don't mind what the others decide, but I'll defend our church as long as God lets me live on this Earth. I was born here, I got married here. The Lord and Virgin Mary are always with us.

This is my contribution to this church. I made these wainscotings, I also made this arch... all beautiful... the furniture, the doors, the entrance and all the wainscotting, all made by me, just like the holy church in Corna.

See how pretty they are. And one day, will we wake up and the church will be on the bottom of the cyanide lake?

EUGEN CORNEA

There have been many tragedies in Roşia Montană . I know of cases where people sold their parents' houses without telling them. They woke up to find a note saying: "We've taken the money for the house, now you have to move out."

Ever since the investor came, there's only hostility in the community. Brothers and friends have become enemies.

This project only has victims. And we, the locals, we say: "Gold has become a curse upon us." I don't even wear my wedding ring, because I've come to hate gold.



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Gold is what drives these looters, because I won't call them investors, when they chase us from our homes and make us into outcasts.

NARRATION

Like most rural communities, Roşia Montană is losing its young working people to the cities. Mining – and working for Gold Corporation – is one of very few job prospects on the horizon here.

FLORIN ONISIE

The young adults work at Gold Corporation. There's no other source of income.

ANDREI GRUBER

If another investor came and there was a new development plan, that would be great, because even the young would turn against them.

COSMIN MORARIU

For the time being, the mine is their only chance to survive. If they oppose the project they are threatened with the sack. They have no other option. With this development plan there's nothing to do apart from mining.

You can't get planning permission for a shop or hotel. Or to make an exhibit out of the historic Roman mine shafts.

NARRATION

Romania takes its name from the Romans – and tunneling deep into these mountains, Romans were the first to plunder Roşia Montană for gold.

These shafts were not only an engineering feat, but they also preserved wax tablets that contain the only known primary records of Roman law.

Many of these galleries will be destroyed if the Gold Corporation's mine project is approved.

Archaeologists consider the site unique, so they have recommended to UNESCO that it be added to the World Heritage List.

EUGEN CORNEA

This mountain, which is full of holes, contains over 4 miles of Roman mine shafts and tunnels, which are threatened with destruction.

MAN

This is the top part of Corna Valley. This will be where they put all the waste.

NARRATION



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In 2003, members of the European Parliament arrived to review the proposed gold mine. At the time, Romania was applying to become a member state and while the EU had no formal role in evaluating the project, its environmental rules would apply once Romania joined the Union – as it did in January 2007.

JONAS SJÖSTEDT

Well, it is hard to make a final judgment because if you listen to the company it all sounds very good of course, but if you listen to the local opinion and the NGOs there are plenty of problems.

They will use enormous amounts of cyanide for example and they will make enormous amounts of money, probably, if they start the project. There are other gold mines around in the EU. For example in my home country in Sweden, in Finland they are opening new mines, and they also use cyanide, but they used in very low concentration compared to the Baia Mare accident. And the question here is that what kind of technique they will use. Will they use the most modern and environmental friendly technique which the company says that they will do.

What can they promise in terms of financing and restructuring the landscape once they leave this site? Because when they leave it, it should not look like this, it should look like it did before or very close to that.

EUGEN DAVID

We have turned to the EU, because we are desperate. We've been waiting for you like the Messiah.

JONAS SJÖSTEDT

As we all know one of the most controversial land mining project in Europe is right here. We came here because we wanted to know more about this very controversial project.

IOAN PISO

The Roman tunnels known as Alburnus Maior, are unique in the whole world.

We, the archaeologists, aren't against progress. The question is what the country could gain or lose as a result of such a deal.

IOAN MERA

In July, 2003 the Catholic, Protestant, and Unitarian bishops of Transylvania issued the following resolution: "We declare the plan to be unacceptable, as it would have disastrous consequences.

There are 5 churches and 9 cemeteries here. What would those who passed away have said if they'd known that people would come with bulldozers to dig up their remains?



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At funerals I say: "Seal this grave until the second coming of our Lord Jesus." Then I use a hoe to make a cross on the coffin with soil. If the Gold Corporation. thinks it's superior to Christ, then I have nothing more to say.

GABRIELLA SZÉKELY

Here's the groom. I'm his aunt. Even in this dying village, there are still weddings.

NARRATION

Change and continuity compete here. Young people still marry, though this couple does not depend on mining for employment.

The groom's aunt, Gabriella Szekely, was a teacher in Roşia Montană for 34 years, but now has broken her ties with the village, and taken Gold Corporation's money to leave.

GABRIELLA SZÉKELY

I left Roşia Montană a year ago. I've found a good place to live, I'm very satisfied. You won't hear any complaints about Gold Corporation from me. They paid me what was due to me.

This is the entrance to the Unitarian church. It was built in the honor of God in 1796. And here, next to the church, is the grave of my dear husband. I hope that with the help of the Gold Corporation. I can move him to Cluj. Gold Corporation will pay for the exhumation, transportation, and the new grave. And everything.

My husband's been here for 12 years. This used to be my house. It's so big I often got lost in it.

I can look at this house with serenity. It secured a peaceful retirement for me. Thanks to the Gold Corporation.

NARRATION

Margit Buran, a retired accountant is resolute. She won't deal with the Canadian company.

MARGIT BURAN

A lot of people have left, because of the money. I'm poor, I only have a small pension, but I don't want their millions. I don't need a house either because I have a place to live.

I bought the apartment from the little savings I had. We belong here, that's why I don't want to move. All my relatives are here. They died of silicosis, because they worked underground, like my father.



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I married my husband, Sandu, and we had one son. He was born in 1959 and died in 1977 at age 18. He had a heart attack while playing soccer.

My only comfort is to come here, in winter, summer, rain or snow. Every day. If I can't come in the morning, I come later. I come and pray, and talk to them.

I tell them what I did the day before, and my plans for the day. This is my only consolation. I told the Gold Corp. people, but they don't believe me that it's not the house, it's the grave that matters... I told them if they didn't believe me may God put them in my situation, and let them bury their only child.

When I say this, they say nothing.

NARRATION

Buran expressed these concerns to the Gold Corporation. They assured her that the grave is in the Protected Zone, and will not be moved.

MARGIT BURAN

I just want to be buried here, next to my only child and my husband, and all my loved ones.

EUGEN CORNEA

We are in Corna. Gold Corporation has started demolishing the houses, before approval of the environmental impact study, and this proves that the company is sure of getting all the permits. This is why they've started preparing the ground.

NARRATION

As part of its application process Gold Corporation submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment in 2006 to the Romanian Ministry of the Environment. This must be approved before mining can start.

JOHN ASTON

The strongest part of the impact assessment study is the fact that it's been done by over 1000 experts from Romania and from the European Union. This is the first project in Europe, in fact, the first project to really approach mining from the perspective of mining for the community, mining for life after mining. Only 10% of our project is about mining. The rest is very much about sustainable development, protecting the historical beauty in Roşia Montană .

It's about making the area accessible to business, accessible to tourists and really a place where the community can live and not where the community will end up dying.



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NARRATION

A committee overseen by the Minister of the Environment is meeting in Romania's capital, Bucharest, to consider the project. Their recommendation will be presented to the prime minister for final approval.

ATTILA KORODI

This investment is defined as a private investment in Romania. So we can't say it's in the national interest. This means people who live or have property there cannot be removed by force. Even if only one person continued to live there, the current environmental impact study would need to be modified because it does not include the human presence factor. In principal the locals can stop this project.

NARRATION

After ten years of planning and maneuvering, the fate of Roșia Montană still hangs in the balance.

In 2007, gold sells for almost \$700 an ounce on the world market. As the price has doubled in a decade, Roșia Montană Gold Corporation and its investors can afford to be patient.

But some residents have only hardened their resolve to stay.

EUGEN DAVID

As far as I'm concerned they can harass me for a hundred years, I won't go anywhere. So they won't get any approval.

EUGEN CORNEA

Here comes Mici.

MARIA CORNEA

Good afternoon. I'm first giving water to Eugen because he didn't even drink from the warm water.

EUGEN DAVID

Yes, give it to your husband. My wife is coming soon.

MARIA CORNEA

I'm not going to give you any more until Maria comes.

EUGEN CORNEA

I want to drink water from her hand. Thanks, my dear.

MARIA CORNEA



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Drink as much as you like, my dear. I pulled it from the well with my own hands.

EUGEN DAVID
If you keep on singing, you might get hurt.

EUGEN CORNEA
Usually you sing when you party.

MARIA CORNEA
You can sing without drinking.

EUGEN DAVID
We can sing more when the Gold Corporation leaves. We'll dance the hora.