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'The Gold Seekers' (Los Buscadores)

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Photo provided

Let us start with a little bit of history. During the Paraguayan War against the Triple Alliance of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay in the 19th century, it is thought that rich Paraguayans buried their treasure as occupying forces took over their country. It has remained a vivid urban legend in Paraguay that millions are still hidden and gold seekers continue to look for it today. "The Gold Seekers," which opens Sept. 7 at the Orinda Theatre, follows the adventure of a group of colorful characters embarking in such a gold-seeking quest.

After producing "7 Boxes" five years ago, the first Paraguayan blockbuster, Juan Carols Maneglia and Tana Schembori return with this exciting and fun film. The four gold seekers are two teenage boys, an unsightly but intelligent young maid, and a discombobulated middle-aged man. Their naivety and good nature attract a lot of attention from really bad guys who are willing to put their hands on an ever elusive treasure at all costs.

As the movie develops and the rhythm picks up, it becomes more and more complicated for the four unlikely allies to get to the treasure of which they dream. The movie describes in very touching ways a series of humble people, struggling in the margin of this South American society, living by their wits as the water of the Paraguay River rises and threatens to flood entire neighborhoods.

"The Gold Seekers" showcases actors who look like ordinary people on the street. Somewhat clumsy, not very attractive, they are nonetheless endearing and deliver quite believable performances. It would have been nice to see more character development with some of the side characters, such as the mother of Manu played by Tomás Arredondo, who is the central teenager who inherits a book from his grandfather where the treasure map is hidden. His mother is still a young woman burdened by much and fighting back.

The movie gives a glimpse of a society where faith and superstition coexist, where poor and rich people seem to have lost some of their sense of reality and are ready to face life's vicissitudes with a mix of opportunism and fatalism.

Is there really a treasure and will they find it? Go to the movies to find out and enjoy a very pleasant time that will transport spectators to quite a different world.

"The Gold Seekers" is brought to the Orinda Theatre by the International Film Showcase beginning Sept. 7 for a one week engagement. For information, visit lamorindatheatres.com.

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[back](#)

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