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*A Quarterly Journal of Recorded Vocal Art*

## ELZA SZAMOSI – The first Hungarian Puccini Soprano

by

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Elza Szamosi [pronunciation: El-sa Sa-mo-shee], often labelled as 'The Hungarian Destinn', was one of the most remarkable Hungarian singers of the early twentieth century. She was a versatile artist: the best Hungarian Carmen of the time, an ideal performer of *femme fatale* roles and, like her Hungarian contemporaries Ilona Szoyer, Teréz Krammer, Emmy Kosáry, Béla Környei and József Gábor, had a remarkable career as an operetta singer as well. Her art was admired by Giacomo Puccini, Eugen d'Albert and Franz Lehár.

### Biography

Elza Szamosi was born in 1881 (not in 1884 as written in many lexicon articles) in Budapest, the daughter of a well-known doctor, Jakab Samek. Her original name was Erzsébet Samek; she appeared on theatre playbills as 'Elsa Samek' in her early years in Germany, and changed this to the Hungarian 'Szamosi' only in 1903, at her first performances in Hungary.

We have very little information about her juvenile years. She did not attend a music school in the conventional sense but rather learned from private teachers; the most important was Rafael Quirino Merli, who had a singing school in Budapest from 1897 to 1916. Quintina Gianolli-Lorenzini, who taught privately in Budapest from 1907 to 1916, was also one of Szamosi's teachers. Szamosi mentioned in one of her later interviews that she had also studied with Johannes Röss and Selma Nicklass-Kempner, who were teachers of the Conservatorium

der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna, but Szamosi was not a student of that institution.

In 1901 she sang at an audition at the Semperoper in Dresden, where Georg Henry Pierson, the director of the Königlische Hofoper of Berlin, was also present and offered her a contract. It is very likely that she did not sing at any performances in Berlin, but obviously learned a lot from, among others, the performances of the young Emmy Destinn there. Szamosi's patron, Pierson, died in February 1902, and his successor, Count von Hochberg, did not have a need for Szamosi in Berlin, but introduced her to the audience in Magdeburg on 17 April, 1902, in the title role of *Carmen*.

In the 1902–1903 season Szamosi was a member of the Stadttheater in Leipzig and sang altogether twenty roles, including mainly smaller parts, but also such main roles as Carmen, Anita in *La Navarraise* by Massenet, Nicklausse in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, both Elisabeth and Venus, Fricka in *Die Walküre* or Erda in *Siegfried*. Obviously, she was not capable of performing all of these roles as a 21–22-year-old singer then, but she had the possibility to sing together with, for example, Jacques Urlus or Lucie Weidt, and sang some performances with Arthur Nikisch.

In 1903 she returned to Budapest. In a few months she had become famous in Budapest as a member of the recently-opened operetta theatre Király Színház [King Theatre], which soon became the most important operetta theatre of the first half of the twentieth century in Budapest. She had a highly successful but very short career there: she appeared at the opening night as Ellen in Jenő Huszka's operetta *Aranyvirág* [Gold Flower], and later in two further roles. She became so popular that the art weekly *A hét* [The Week] published her portrait on the front page of its first issue of 1904. Soon she broke her contract and became a member at another operetta theatre, the Népszínház [People's Theatre]. There she débuted in the title role of the operetta *Katinka grófné* [Countess Katinka] by Iván Hűvös, and immediately became involved in a 'prima donna war' with the theatre's illustrious prima donna, Klára Küry. The young and attractive Szamosi decidedly got the better of Küry in a very short time. However, she was ultra-ambitious: already, in November 1903, she appeared as a guest singer at the Royal Hungarian Opera as Carmen and Anita, and in April 1904 as Mignon. Moreover, in September 1904 she had a guest appearance at the Hofoper in Vienna as Carmen, but by then she was already a member of the Royal Hungarian Opera.

Behind her ambitions and early Hungarian successes was her first husband, Nándor Somló, a prosperous doctor who was an enthusiastic opera fan (his name became famous at the dress rehearsal of the Budapest début of Georg Anthes, because Anthes as Lohengrin accidentally injured Vilmos Beck who performed Telramund, and it was Somló who sutured the wound on the stage). He was also learning to sing, and met Szamosi first at the voice school of Quirino Merli. They married in July 1904, and after that Somló suspended his practice as a doctor and focused on his wife's career. He took his role more than seriously. Later he even went to extremes, such as hissing the rival prima donna off the stage during Szamosi's US tour.

Szamosi's short career coincided with the first 'golden age' of the Royal Hungarian Opera in the 20th century. Moreover, it was Szamosi herself, and her successes in Puccini's operas, that overturned the almost fanatical admiration of

Wagner – exploded by the belated, but memorable Hungarian première of *Tristan und Isolde* with Karel Burian in 1901 – after the turn of the century. Initially she sang mezzo-soprano and alto parts, mainly from the French repertoire (Carmen, Anita, Nicklausse, Mignon, Dalila and even Amneris) and in Wagner's operas (Waltraute, Erda). However, at the same time, in November 1904 she appeared at the Király Színház again, at the world première of *János vitéz* by Pongrác Kacsóh, as a compensation for her former break of contract there. This work – halfway between operetta and a folk play – became, besides *Csárdásfürstin* by Imre Kálmán, one of the greatest successes in the Hungarian musical-theatrical history of the twentieth century. Surprisingly, Szamosi's role, the French princess, is a high soprano role with virtuoso *coloratura*.

Looking back, this soprano role is less surprising: from 1905 on Szamosi turned to more serious soprano operatic roles. On 27 April 1905 she created the role of Mimì at the Hungarian première of *La Bohème* with roaring success at the Royal Hungarian Opera. In the next season she even surpassed this with the title roles of Massenet's *Manon* (23 December 1905, second cast of the Hungarian première) and *Madama Butterfly* (12 May 1906, Hungarian première). The latter première was directed by the composer himself, who worked a complete week with the ensemble of the Royal Hungarian Opera before the performance. A festival was organised for him, where his operas which were on the repertoire of the Opera were performed. On 8 May *La Bohème* was performed with Elza Szamosi as Mimì, and on 10 May *Tosca* with Teréz Krammer in the title role. Szamosi's interpretation held Puccini spellbound. After the first *Madama Butterfly* he recommended her to Henry Savage for a seven-month USA tour for the role of Cio-Cio-San. Elza Szamosi was still only 25 years old when she had the honour of singing this role the USA première of the opera, on 15 October 1906, in Washington DC.

Before the tour, Szamosi travelled to Ostende with her husband. She took part in the summer festivals of Ostende four times, in 1904, 1905, 1906 and 1909. She became popular in the bath city, performing mainly at orchestral concerts at the Kursaal, but in 1905 she also appeared at a performance of *Carmen* at the Théâtre Royal. She performed together with, among others, Francesco Tamagno and the Hungarian violinist Franz Vecsey, and in 1909 she was mentioned in the local press among the stars of the season, together with Enrico Caruso and Frieda Hempel. A journalist of *Le Carillon* even published an article about her in 1905. It was Ostende where Gustav Mahler heard and invited her in 1904 for the guest appearance at the Vienna Hofoper.

Henry Savage's Castle Square Opera Company prepared for the *Madama Butterfly* tour with four singers for the title role: Adelaide Norwood-Brandt, Elza Szamosi, Louise Janssen and Estelle Bloomfield, with the intention that Rena Vivienne, who was the first singer of Kate in the opera, would also learn the title role during the first months of the tour. However, Norwood-Brandt terminated her contract on the day after the first performance, because she felt offended by the fact that it was not she who would sing the title role in the première. That is why another soprano, maybe the most famous in the cast, was engaged in November 1906: Florence Easton. On the basis of the known playbills it seems that Elza Szamosi was the *prima donna* of the ensemble. She sang the role of Cio-Cio-San at most of the premières in, among others, Washington DC, New York (Garden Theatre), Chicago, San Francisco, Salt Lake City and Cleveland. On

19 December 1906 Savage announced a special performance in New York, with three different sopranos in the three acts of the opera. Szamosi appeared in the last act. This performance was even visited by Geraldine Farrar, Lina Cavalieri, Enrico Caruso, Antonio Scotti and Pol Plançon, who were already prepared for the Met première of the opera.

The tour began in Washington DC from where they travelled to Baltimore and Boston, and then spent six weeks in New York. In general, they had eight performances a week, with one day of rest and double performances on Wednesdays and Saturdays. In the second half of the tour the only day of rest was spent travelling (Cincinnati, Cleveland, St. Louis, Chicago, Duluth, Grand Forks, Butte, Spokane, San Francisco, Oakland, Salt Lake City, Denver, Omaha, Toronto and Brooklyn). A short article in *The Goodwin's Weekly* (29 December 1906) demonstrates the success of Savage's company: "Giacomo Puccini, the composer of the fascinating Japanese opera and also composer of 'La Bohème' and 'Tosca,' sent a cablegram to Mr. Savage in which he said: 'You have sent me more royalties from your American production of 'Madam Butterfly' than all the other impresarios in the world. By this I know that you have succeeded. Thanks and sincere congratulations.'" At the end of the tour Savage offered Szamosi a new contract for the role of Hanna Glawari in Lehár's *Die lustige Witwe*, but she rejected it, partly because of her operatic career, and partly because she found the honorarium too small.

After the USA tour she returned to Hungary and remained a member of the Opera until the First World War. Despite her successes in America, Szamosi's US engagement aroused a controversy in the Hungarian press. In May and June 1907 she had several guest appearances in Budapest and the Opera announced her performances with increased ticket prices, consequently most of the journalists were resentful of Szamosi, focusing on her salary in the US and deeming her greedy; they examined the fatigue of her voice in detail after the tour, stating that "she exchanged her voice for gold in the US".

She tried to define herself as a real prima donna in the autumn of 1908: among her new roles we can find *Tosca* and Elisabeth (*Tannhäuser*), but the critical responses were ambivalent. It took a year until she found herself completely, but she excelled again from 1908 to 1910 at Hungarian premières of d'Albert's *Tiefland*, Lehár's *Das Fürstenkind* and Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West* (all in the presence of the composers). As a member of the Royal Hungarian Opera she was also praised in operas which remained unsuccessful in Budapest (*Le Chemineau*, *Rahab*, *Tess*, *Carmela*, *Oberst Chabert* and some Hungarian operas).

At the end of 1910 her marriage had deteriorated and she divorced her husband in 1911. She might have grown tired of his aggressive management, but there was another reason: Szamosi fell in love with Béla Környei, the new tenor of the Royal Hungarian Opera, with whom she had sung together in many performances since his début at the Opera in 1908. The events ended tragically: Nándor Somló lost his mind and died in 1912 in a psychiatric hospital. The divorce drained Elza Szamosi; her voice became tired again and again and turned increasingly sharper in the higher *tessitura*. Some roles were taken away from her, for example that of *Salome* in 1912, and, most painfully, even her star part, *Carmen*, at the revival of the opera in February 1914. The audience protested against this by not applauding after the Habanera for the first time at the Royal

Hungarian Opera.

As with Geraldine Farrar, Szamosi also became involved in the silent movie industry, even if for only a single occasion. Fortunately, a copy of her only film, *A munkászubbonny* [*The Workman's Overall*, director: István Bródy, première: 1 February, 1915] survived the 20th century and appeared in 2017 at the EYE Filmmuseum in Amsterdam. It is not known whether she would have had further engagements as a silent film actress, because soon after she left Hungary.

After the outbreak of the World War, the contracts of the members of the Royal Hungarian Opera were collectively dissolved and the Opera remained closed until 1915. During the first years of the Great War Szamosi appeared at charity concerts in several cities and she also had some guest appearances mainly at the Népopera [People's Opera] in Budapest. She sang there, besides some remarkable *Carmen* performances with Hermann Jadowker, her first Azucena in 1915, conducted by Jenő [Eugen] Szenkár. In February 1915 Szamosi and Környei appeared again at the Király Színház, in the first Hungarian performance of Franz Lehár's *Endlich allein*.

Szamosi and Környei moved to Vienna in 1916 when Környei became a member of the Hofoper. In Vienna Szamosi did not have an engagement; she gave private singing lessons, while Környei had successes in several *Heldentenor* roles and at the world première of the Viennese version of *Ariadne auf Naxos*. In the season of 1916–1917 she was engaged as a guest singer of the Carltheater for some performances, but had to cancel them. That season she had only a song recital in Budapest, where she sang *Frauenliebe und -leben* by Schumann and some songs by Brahms and Hungarian composers, accompanied by Oszkár Dienzl. It is very likely that Szamosi could not accommodate herself to the new role of being secondary at the side of a singer-husband, and her second marriage also ended in divorce.

After the end of the Great War Szamosi returned to Budapest, but she remained part of the social life in Vienna as well. In 1919 she was penalized in Vienna because she hosted gatherings in her own flat where they played forbidden card games. She did not become a member of the Royal Hungarian Opera again, but occasionally sang as a guest singer at performances of *Carmen* at the Opera and the City Theatre of Budapest. Her last operatic appearance remained memorable: this time she was able to sing *Carmen* again with Karel Burian as Don José. The two great singers inspired each other to such an extent that Szamosi inadvertently injured Burian when she knocked him over in the duet of the last act.

Szamosi was only 41 years old when she became part of the 'glorious past'. A journalist recognized her in the audience at the dress rehearsal of *Il Trittico* by Puccini in Budapest, and wrote: "We searched for the genius of the music of Puccini on the stage in vain. We found it later, in the audience. She was sitting at the edge of the last row, in a white blouse; her hair was black as the ebony [...]. Besides her hundred faults she was one of the most wonderful phenomena of the Hungarian operatic performance." (*Új Idők*, 17 December 1922). Szamosi married for the third time a merchant, József Reisz, in 1922, but their marriage soon deteriorated: Reisz filed for divorce as early as 1923. Szamosi began to teach singing at the Fodor Music School in 1923, but died unexpectedly on 15 July 1924. She had no children. Her grave is to be found at the Kozma street Jewish cemetery in Budapest, but has not been cared for for many decades. Márton

Karczag, the archivist of the Hungarian State Opera, found it in May 2018 with the help of my research and a new tomb stone was inaugurated in September 2019, as the closing event of the Puccini year of the Hungarian State Opera. Szamosi's name remained part of the cultural memory in Hungary, appearing in poems, short stories and novels by, for example, Gyula Krúdy (*A 42-ös mozsarak* [*The Howitzers of 42*], 1914), Gyula Juhász (*Carmen*, dedicated to Elza Szamosi, 1920) or Janka Fábrián (*Az angyalos ház* [*The House with Angels*], 2011), and her name has become inseparable from the history of the Puccini operas in Hungary.

### Szamosi's recordings and singing style

Elza Szamosi was involved in the sound recording industry already in 1905; however, there are very few recordings of her, made by smaller record companies. Among the big international recording firms which were present in Hungary at the time, The Gramophone Company made only two recordings of her; Columbia and Pathé did not record her voice. Surprisingly, the Első Magyar Hanglemezgyár/Premier Record made no recordings of Szamosi either. Most of her recordings are arias of her most successful characters, like *Carmen*, *Mignon*, *Dalila* and the main roles of Giacomo Puccini's operas. Most of them were not reissued during the twentieth century.

Her first recordings were made in 1905 in Budapest for the Lyrophon label. Since she did not record any excerpts from *La Bohème*, it seems likely that the recording session took place before May 1905. In September 1905, after her performances in Ostende, Szamosi had a short recording session in Berlin with Homophone. We know of only one recording from this session ('*Mon coeur...*' from *Samson et Dalila*, sung in German), but, as Christian Zwarg's research demonstrates, on the basis of the structure of the matrix numbers and the usual practice of Homophone, Szamosi probably made at least four recordings, of two arias, both in German and in Hungarian.

Her longest recording session took place in September 1908 in Budapest. She recorded at least nine arias and Gounod's famous 'Ave Maria', and the recordings were made in two sections close to each other, on the same day or on two consecutive days. The recordings were published on Dacapo discs, and, as recent discographic research revealed (thanks to Christian Zwarg), some of the Dacapo recordings were also published by the Polyphon Musikwerke AG around 1909.

These Dacapo discs are unique among the early Hungarian operatic recordings. Most of the early Hungarian operatic recordings are in that language, as performances at the Royal Hungarian Opera were given in the vernacular at the time. However, Szamosi recorded French and German arias in German, and Puccini arias in Italian. Why did she make recordings in foreign languages in Budapest? In Budapest she would not have been able to sing *Mimi* and *Tosca* in Italian. Maybe she was aware in the USA that the records which could be distributed internationally would help the international career of an opera singer. After the USA tour she returned to Hungary with the possibility of another tour there, and perhaps she thought that these discs would be a good advertisement for her art. But in this case why did she not record any excerpts from *Madama Butterfly*? Would she have performed other roles after the exhausting USA tour where she sang only *Cio-Cio-San* every five days? We can only speculate.

Her next recording session took place at the turn of 1910–1911. It was organized by the Lindström AG and the recordings were published with Odeon, Diadal and Jumbola labels. The matrix numbers show that Szamosi went to the recording studio with Béla Környei and they alternately recorded arias with the Orchestra of the Opera from several operas and operettas, including *Das Fürstenkind* by Franz Lehár, which was premièred at the Royal Hungarian Opera on 20 December 1910. This time she recorded an excerpt from *Madama Butterfly*, but it is not the most famous aria ‘Un bel dì vedremo’, but the much less familiar short aria from the second act, ‘Che tua madre’. It would be interesting to know why she chose this excerpt instead of ‘Un bel dì’, but she did not sing the final version of the work. In spite of the fact that Puccini created the final version of *Madama Butterfly* for the Paris première in December 1906, four years later Szamosi still recorded the 1905 version, which she sang at the Hungarian première in May 1906. It is very feasible that the Royal Hungarian Opera was still using the score of the 1905 version in 1910, so Szamosi had to sing this earlier version of the work in Budapest. But this inspires a strange hypothesis: although the Paris version was premièred at the end of December 1906 Szamosi performed the earlier version of the work during her USA tour with the Castle Square Opera Company even in spring 1907. The final version of *Madama Butterfly* was premièred in Budapest only in September 1913, but with Anna Medek in the title role. According to recent data, Szamosi never sang the definitive version of the work.

The last two recordings of Elza Szamosi were made on 28 October, 1913, by The Gramophone Company. She recorded two arias of her mezzo-soprano roles, Carmen and Dalila. Some online sources identify a Szamosi 78rpm recording of Santuzza’s aria (‘Voi lo sapete’) without labels, but it is not she. The matrix numbers fit into the matrix series of the Első Magyar Hanglemezgyár and it is Irma Joksch, another singer of the Royal Hungarian Opera, who sings on the recording.

It is hard to define Elza Szamosi’s voice type even though we can listen to her voice. If we take into consideration her repertoire, it is much more confusing. She sang alto roles like Erda in the *Ring* cycle, mezzo-soprano roles like Carmen, Dalila or Amneris, soprano roles like Tosca, Mimì, Cio-Cio-San and higher soprano operetta roles with high Cs such as Mary-Ann in *Fürstenkind* by Lehár. Considering that sometimes, mainly after 1905, she had to transpose the higher sections of her roles – it is obvious not only from the Hungarian press but also from the *Madama Butterfly* excerpt – that her voice type is mezzo-soprano. Her early Lyrophon and last HMV recordings show us a rich mezzo-soprano voice with an enchanting timbre. However, we know from the Hungarian press that she sang brilliant high Cs in operetta roles in 1903–1904, and even in 1910. Unfortunately, she made a very small number of recordings, and there are no operetta excerpts among them, so we cannot answer this question confidently. The small number of her recordings is also striking if we think about her most successful roles. Why did she record no arias from *Die Königin von Saba* or *Tiefland*, in addition to the case of ‘Un bel dì’?

Her recordings demonstrate a unique mixture of different singing styles. Elements of the performance style of the French *opéra comique* (labelled by Jürgen Kesting as ‘Le beau Idéal’), the naturalistic *verismo* and the light and coquettish interpretation style of operetta intermingle in her singing. However, it

is very likely that her stage presence was much more memorable than her voice itself. The written sources make it obvious that Szamosi was an excellent actress. As she said in an interview in 1909, the most important and primary element for her in the course of learning a new role was acting; the singing was only secondary. And it is telling that the critics always praised her appearance in their reviews, emphasizing that her acting and mainly her beauty were very important parts of her performances.

She must have been a phenomenon not only for the ears, but also for the eyes. On her recordings of Carmen’s ‘Habanera’ we can notice an audio parallel of that: a rhythmic freedom which is unique even in the context of the performance practice of the turn of the century. She is not only independent from the strict rhythm of the dance accompaniment, but also sings extremely long – sometimes more than 10 second – *fermate*. In these cases the scene (and the time) are frozen, and the audience has no way of knowing when Szamosi will continue the aria. Even if we do not see the singer, the surprising gesture and the intensity in Szamosi’s voice during the *fermata* force the audience to watch and listen to the singer with bated breath. On stage, in a role such as Carmen, it can be a primary erotic element which forces the spectator to maintain gaze on the dancing female singer. Furthermore, the short and quick ornament after the last *fermata* is a surprise, a gesture of ‘something more’. When we think that she has ended the note, she has an extra, very sensual gesture, like a fillip. As a result she holds the gaze of the spectator until, and even after the last moment. It is like a dance – one could almost say a mesmerising slow dance.

Added to the mixture of the singing styles and acting talent her performance had one more component. It is remarkable that among Szamosi’s most successful roles there are many attractive female parts which can be described as ‘oriental’, ‘other’ or, at least, ‘strange’. The seductive and mysterious *fin-de-siècle* women, the operatic *femme fatales* found an ideal performer in Elza Szamosi. She appeared frequently as gypsy women (Carmen and Azucena), as attractive oriental queens (Die Königin von Saba or Amneris), as an alluring biblical priestess (Dalila), furthermore, as a daughter of the far-east (Cio-Cio-San), as a wild Spanish lover (Anita in *La Navarraise* or Marta in *Tiefland*), and last, but not least, as a woman of the New World (Minnie in *La Fanciulla del West*). Her only silent film also shows her in the role of a tempting gypsy girl. In the context of the Hungarian *fin-de-siècle* the eroticism and the ‘strangeness’ of these roles became intensified by the – then well-known – Sephardic Jewish origin of Elza Szamosi.

This somewhat eclectic mixture strengthens the statement of the Hungarian musicologist Tibor Tallián, who stated that Elza Szamosi hallmarked the secessionist era of the Royal Hungarian Opera. However, the mixture of styles sometimes caused an unusual reception of the performances. In the reviews of Szamosi’s performances at Hungarian premières we can read about operetta-like interpretations of Puccini’s or Saint-Saëns’s operas. A review of her first Dalila in Budapest, when she sang together with Georg Anthes, can illustrate this (*Budapester Tagblatt*, 4 November, 1904): “[...] we had to miss the sense of style. This was really evident in the duo with Samson, as you saw two figures – each from a different world: Ms. Szamosi, still somewhat under the influence of the lightly dressed muse, and Mr. Anthes, a hero singer of perfect artistic nobility.”

**Operatic repertoire of Elza Szamosi**

(language key: E = English, G = German, H = Hungarian)

**Opera**

- Georges Bizet: *Carmen* – Carmen (G: 17 April, 1902, H: 21 November, 1903)  
 Gustave Charpentier: *Louise* – Henriette (G: 7 December, 1902)  
 Eugen d'Albert: *Tiefland* – Marta (H: 17 November, 1908)  
 Frédéric d'Erlanger: *Tess* – Tess (H: 19 April 1911)  
 Albert Delmár: *Carmela* – Carmela (H: 18 November, 1911)  
 Friedrich von Flotow: *Martha* – Nancy (G: 20 July, 1902)  
 Clemens von Frankenstein: *Rahab* – Rahab (H: 4 December, 1909)  
 Hermann Goetz: *Der widerspenstigen Zähmung* – Katharina  
 (H: 20 May, 1909)  
 Karl Goldmark: *Die Königin von Saba* – Königin (H: 21 March, 1909)  
 Charles Gounod: *Roméo et Juliette* – Stefano (H: 4 February, 1905)  
 Engelbert Humperdinck: *Hänsel und Gretel* – Sandmännchen  
 (G: 16 September, 1902)  
 Xavier Leroux: *Le cheminau* – Toinette (H: 23 May, 1908)  
 Ferenc Liszt: *Die heilige Elisabeth* – Engel (G: 23 November, 1902)  
 Pietro Mascagni: *Cavalleria Rusticana* – Santuzza (H: 27 October, 1908)  
 Jules Massenet: *Manon* – Manon (H: 23 December, 1905)  
 Jules Massenet: *La Navarraise* – Anita (G: 25 March, 1903,  
 H: 25 November, 1903)  
 Ödön Mihalovich: *Eliana* – Ginevra (H: 16 February, 1908)  
 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: *Die Zauberflöte* – Dritter Genius  
 (G: 31 October, 1902)  
 Otto Nicolai: *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor* – Frau Reich (H: 15 May, 1914)  
 Jacques Offenbach: *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* – Nicklausse  
 (G: 4 September, 1902, H: 16 May, 1904)  
 Giacomo Puccini: *Tosca* – Tosca (H: 17 October, 1907)  
 Giacomo Puccini: *La Bohème* – Mimì (H: 27 April, 1905)  
 Giacomo Puccini: *Madama Butterfly* – Cio-Cio-San (H: 12 May, 1906,  
 E: 15 October, 1906)  
 Giacomo Puccini: *La Fanciulla del West* – Minnie (H: 29 February, 1912)  
 Camille Saint-Saëns: *Samson et Dalila* – Dalila (H: 3 November, 1904)  
 Péter Stojanovits: *A Tigris* [The Tiger] – Aurelie (H: 14 November, 1905)  
 Sándor Szeghő: *Báthory Erzsébet* [Erzsébet Báthory] – Erzsébet  
 (H: 3 May, 1913)  
 Ambroise Thomas: *Mignon* – Mignon (H: 5 April, 1904)  
 Giuseppe Verdi: *Il Trovatore* – Azucena – (H: 16 January, 1915)  
 Giuseppe Verdi: *Aida* – Amneris (H: 26 December, 1904)

- Richard Wagner: *Rienzi* – Friedensbote (G: 18 January, 1903)  
 Richard Wagner: *Tannhäuser* – Elisabeth (G: 14 December, 1902,  
 H: 10 March, 1908); Venus (G: 23 June, 1903)  
 Richard Wagner: *Lohengrin* – Vierter Edelknabe der Elsa (G: 31 August, 1902)  
 Richard Wagner: *Rheingold* – Flosshilde (G: 13 February 1903); Erda  
 (H: 19 January, 1905)  
 Richard Wagner: *Die Walküre* – Grimgerde (G: 22 October, 1902), Fricka  
 (G: 20 February, 1903)  
 Richard Wagner: *Siegfried* – Erda (G: 22 May, 1903, H: 22 January, 1905)  
 Richard Wagner: *Götterdämmerung* – Erste Norn (H: 24 January, 1905);  
 Zweite Norn (G: 5 October, 1902); Waltraute (H: 27 October, 1904)  
 Hermann von Waltershausen: *Oberst Chabert* – Rosina (H: 2 March, 1913)  
 Carl Maria von Weber (arr. Franz Grandaur and Franz Wüllner): *Oberon* –  
 Puck (G: 11 September, 1902)  
 Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari: *Le Donne Curiose* – Eleonora (H: 24 April, 1906)  
 Géza Zichy: *Roland Mester* [Master Roland] – Ms. Parbleu (H: 29 April, 1906)  
 Géza Zichy: *Alár* – Romy (H: 12 January, 1905)  
 Géza Zichy: *II. Rákóczi Ferenc* [Ferenc Rákóczi II] – Princess Sieniawska  
 (H: 30 January, 1909)  
 Heinrich Zoellner: *Die versunkene Glocke* – Dritte Elf (G: 11 May, 1903)

**Operetta:**

- Károly Czobor: *A hajdúk hadnagya* [Lieutenant of the Heyducks] – Jadviga  
 (H: 29 May, 1904)  
 Jenő Huszka: *Aranyvirág* [Golden Flower] – Ellen (H: 6 November, 1903)  
 Iván Húvös: *Katinka grófné* [Countess Katinka] – Katinka  
 (H: 15 February, 1904)  
 Pongrácz Kacsóh: *János vitéz* [Held János] – French Princess  
 (H: 18 November, 1904)  
 József Konti: *A fecskék* [The Swallows] – Amelie (H: 20 January, 1904)  
 József Konti: *A suhanc* [The Stripling] – Eliz (H: 23 April, 1904)  
 Franz Lehár: *Das Fürstenkind* – Mary-Ann (H: 20 December, 1910)  
 Franz Lehár: *Endlich allein* – Dolly (H: 20 February, 1915)  
 Paul Lincke: *Lysistrata* – Bachis (H: 16 December, 1903)  
 Robert Planquette: *Les cloches de Corneville* – Germaine (H: 13 April, 1904)  
 Johann Strauss II: *Der Zigeunerbaron* – Saffi (H: 6 June, 1912)  
 Arthur Sullivan: *The Mikado* – Pitti-Sing (G: 12 May, 1903)  
 Franz von Suppé: *Boccaccio* – Boccaccio (H: 31 December, 1913)  
 Franz von Suppé: *Die schöne Galathée* – Ganymed (H: 6 March, 1905)

**The known recordings of Elza Szamosi**

Language key: (H) Hungarian, (G) German, (I) Italian

(Editor's note: There is no surviving recording documentation for many of these early companies. Even early catalogues would not be of any help because they are equally not specific about titles and exactly what is sung.)

**Lyrophon, Budapest, 1905 [before May?], 10-in. (25 cm)**

with Emil Lichtenberg (piano)

1. *Carmen*: L'amour est un oiseau rebelle (Habanera) (Bizet) (H)  
U 6094                      6094
2. *Mignon*: Romance (Thomas) (H)  
U 6098                      6098
3. *Mignon*: Duet Mignon-Lothario (Thomas) (H?), with Mihály Takáts  
U 6264                      6264                      Meteor C 2418

**Homophon, Berlin, 7 September 1905, 10-in. (25 cm), with piano**

4. *Mignon*: Romance (Thomas) (H)  
3653                      [?]
5. *Mignon*: Romance (Thomas) (G)  
3654                      [?]
6. *Samson et Dalila*: Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix (Saint-Saëns) (H)  
3655                      [?]
7. *Samson et Dalila*: Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix (Saint-Saëns) (G)  
3656                      3656

**Dacapo Record, Budapest, September 1908, 10-in. (25 cm)**

with Alajos Tarnay (piano)

8. *Mignon*: Kennst du das Land (Connais-tu le pays) (Thomas) (G)  
6035                      O-6035  
LP: Qualiton LPX 11310-11; Hungaroton LPX 12640-42 (1984)
9. *Samson et Dalila*: Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix (Saint-Saëns) (G)  
6036                      O-6036
10. *Manon Lescaut*: In quelle trine morbide (Puccini) (I)  
6037                      O-6037
11. *Carmen*: L'amour est un oiseau rebelle (Habanera) (Bizet) (G)  
6038                      O-6038                      Polyphon 3604
12. *Tosca*: Vissi d'arte (Puccini) (I)  
6039                      O-6039
13. *Carmen*: En vain, pour éviter (Bizet) (G)  
6040                      O-6040
14. Ave Maria (Bach-Gounod)  
6055                      O-6055                      Polyphon 3606

15. *Tannhäuser*: Dich, teure Halle (Wagner) (G)  
6056                      O-6056
16. *La Bohème*: Sì, mi chiamano Mimì (Puccini) (I)  
6057                      O-6057
17. *Mignon*: Je connais un pauvre enfant (Styrienne) (Thomas) (G)  
6059                      O-6059                      Polyphon 3605

**Lindström AG, Budapest, December 1910 - January 1911,**

with the orchestra of the Royal Hungarian Opera, conducted by Henrik Benkő

18. *Mignon*: Romance (Thomas) (H)  
Ho 447                      Odeon A 115039                      Jumbola 15636                      Diadal D33
19. *Carmen*: L'amour est un oiseau rebelle (Habanera) (Bizet) (H)  
Ho 449x                      Odeon A 115040                      Jumbola 15637                      Diadal D33
20. *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*: Belle nuit (Barcarolle) (Offenbach) (H)  
Ho 450x                      Jumbola 15638
21. *Madama Butterfly*: Che tua madre (Puccini) (I)  
Ho 452                      Odeon A 115042                      Jumbola 15639  
CD: Rodolfo Celletti: *Storia dell'Opera Italiana*, CD25/12 (2000)

**The Gramophone Company, Budapest, 8 October 1913, 10-in. (25 cm)**

with piano

22. *Samson et Dalila*: Mon Coeur s'ouvre à ta voix (Saint-Saëns) (H)  
5935ab                      73362                      AK 111
23. *Carmen*: En vain, pour éviter (Bizet) (H)  
5936ab                      73361                      AK111                      AM448  
LP: Radioton LPX 31005 (1986)

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