

## JOHN RIESEN TENOR



Hailed as “impassioned...and vibrant” (Opera Today), award-winning American tenor John Riesen is consistently impressing audiences with his “fantastic, powerful voice” (Texarkana Gazette). Riesen’s growing career boasts a variety of roles in which he excels and includes significant work in Opera, Musical Theater and concert. He has released two studio recording albums: *What You’d Call a Dream* (2019) and *Christmas at Home* (2020) that have reached over 500,000 streams on Spotify and Apple Music. He has also collaborated with Emmy-nominated PBS TV pianist Marina Arsenijevic in both video performance (during COVID-19) and in studio recordings to be released in 2021.

Riesen’s 2019-20 COVID-19 affected season included his professional debut as Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette* as a guest artist with the Janiec Opera Company and his Michigan Opera Theater debut as Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd* as well as Prince Charming in *Cendrillon* with Opera Birmingham and Younger Thompson in *Glory Denied* with The Atlanta Opera and UrbanArias, Bill Calhoun in *Kiss Me, Kate* with Intermountain Opera Bozeman, and appearing in concert with Berkshire Opera Festival. This season includes concert appearances with Intermountain Opera Bozeman, Gulfshore Opera, Ralph Rackstraw in *HMS Pinafore* with Pensacola Opera, and Younger Thompson in *Glory Denied* with Berkshire Opera Festival.

The 2018-19 season for Mr. Riesen saw many house and role debuts including Prince Charming in *Cendrillon* with Opera Company of Middlebury, Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* with Intermountain Opera Bozeman, Alfredo in *La Traviata* with Gulfshore Opera, Younger Thomspson in *Glory Denied* with Opera Birmingham and Des Moines Metro Opera, the title role in *Candide* with Chautauqua Opera, and his Lincoln Center debut as Tony in *West Side Story Suite* with the New York City Ballet. In 2017, he made appearances with the Boulder Philharmonic, Marshall Symphony, Jackson Symphony, Shreveport Symphony, as well as in concerts in Texarkana, TX; Pensacola and Miami, FL; Tulsa, OK; Detroit, MI among others. Theatrically, Mr. Riesen was featured as Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast* (Shreveport Opera), Tony in *West Side Story* (Boulder Philharmonic/Central City Opera), Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* (Pensacola Opera), and Frederic in *Pirates of Penzance* (Opera Ithaca).

In 2016, Mr. Riesen completed his second of two seasons as the resident tenor at Shreveport Opera, where he sang multiple leading roles, including Father Grenville in *Dead Man Walking*, Ralph Rackstraw in *H.M.S Pinafore*, Don José (cover)/Remendado in *Carmen*, Frederic in *The Pirates of Penzance* and Alfredo (cover)/Gastone in *La Traviata*. The previous year, John finished his third season at Chautauqua Opera as an AGMA apprentice artist. In his three summers at Chautauqua, he performed many roles, including Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*. He was awarded the Chautauqua Opera’s Studio Artist Award in 2012, Returning Apprentice Award in 2014 and Apprentice Artist Award in his final year, 2015.

Other awards and honors include Great Lakes Regional Finalist in the MONC Auditions (2014, 2013 and 2012) along with Gulf Coast Regional Finalist (2015); first place in the Harold Haugh Light Opera Competition; second place in the Mary Jacobs Smith Singer of the Year Competition (2016 and 2015); fifth place in the Opera Columbus Cooper-Bing Competition (2015); fifth place in the Opera Birmingham Competition among others. In 2014, he also participated as a finalist for Lyric Opera of Chicago’s Ryan Opera Center.

Mr. Riesen has been privileged to sing for political figures, including President Barack Obama, President Jimmy Carter, District Judge Stephanie Kulp Seymour, and Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. He also has been honored to sing the national anthem at several collegiate, semi-professional and professional organizations, including the Detroit Tigers at Comerica Park, the Pensacola Ice Flyers, MSU hockey/baseball and more. Before singing, John avidly pursued athletics and academics, and he attained all-region pitcher status in 2006 and 2007, as well as Academic All-State honors in 2008.

## JOHN RIESEN

### TENOR

#### ROLES

Younger Thompson	<i>Glory Denied</i>	Berkshire Opera Festival	2021
Ralph Rackstraw	<i>HMS Pinafore</i>	Pensacola Opera	2021
Younger Thompson*	<i>Glory Denied</i>	Opera Columbus	2020
King Charles*	<i>Maid of Orleans</i>	Opera Company of Middlebury	2020
Younger Thompson*	<i>Glory Denied</i>	Atlanta Opera	2020
Prince Charmant*	<i>Cendrillon</i>	Opera Birmingham	2020
Bill Calhoun	<i>Kiss Me Kate</i>	Intermountain Opera Bozeman	2020
Younger Thompson	<i>Glory Denied</i>	Urban Arias	2020
Pirelli	<i>Sweeney Todd</i>	Michigan Opera Theatre	2019
Roméo	<i>Roméo et Juliette</i>	Janiec Opera Company	2019
Prince Charmant	<i>Cendrillon</i>	Opera Company of Middlebury	2019
Alfredo	<i>La Traviata</i>	Gulfshore Opera	2019
Lensky	<i>Eugene Onegin</i>	Intermountain Opera Bozeman	2019
Younger Thompson	<i>Glory Denied</i>	Opera Birmingham	2019
Henrik	<i>A Little Night Music</i>	Opera Ithaca	2018
Ralph Rackstraw	<i>HMS Pinafore</i>	Anchorage Opera	2018
Younger Thompson	<i>Glory Denied</i>	Des Moines Metro Opera	2018
Daniel Pilgrim	<i>Capacity for Evil (world premier)</i>	Opera MODO	2018
Candide	<i>Candide</i>	Chautauqua Opera	2018
Tony	<i>West Side Story Suite</i>	NYC Ballet	2018
Tony	<i>West Side Story</i>	Boulder Philharmonic	2018
Gaston	<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>	Shreveport Opera	2018
Pinkerton	<i>Madama Butterfly</i>	Pensacola Opera	2018
Frederic	<i>Pirates of Penzance</i>	Opera Ithaca	2017
Rinuccio	<i>Gianni Schicchi</i>	Crested Butte Festival	2017
Howard Boucher	<i>Dead Man Walking</i>	Pensacola Opera	2017
Rodolfo	<i>La bohème</i>	Shreveport Opera	2016
Alfredo	<i>La Traviata</i>	Tri-Cities Opera	2016
Father Grenville	<i>Dead Man Walking</i>	Shreveport Opera	2016
Ralph Rackstraw	<i>H.M.S. Pinafore</i>	Shreveport Opera	2016
Lensky	<i>Eugene Onegin</i>	Chautauqua Opera	2015
Frederic	<i>The Pirates of Penzance</i>	Shreveport Opera	2015

#### CONCERT/ORATORIO

Tenor Soloist*	Handel: <i>Messiah</i>	Oratorio Society of New York	2020
Tenor Soloist	Rachmaninoff: <i>Vespers</i>	Oratorio Society of New York	2019
Tenor Soloist	<i>Jukebox Gala</i>	Pensacola Opera	2019
Tenor Soloist	Stravinsky: <i>Les Noces</i>	NYC Ballet	2018
Tenor Soloist	Mozart: <i>Requiem</i>	Mason Symphony	2018
Tenor Soloist	Handel: <i>Messiah</i>	New Amsterdam Opera	2017
Tenor Soloist	<i>Pop's Concert</i>	Marshall Symphony	2017
Tenor Soloist	<i>Opera Pops</i>	Jackson Symphony	2017
Tenor Soloist	<i>Jukebox Gala</i>	Pensacola Opera	2017
Tenor Soloist	<i>A Night at the Opera</i>	Texarkana Symphony	2017
Tenor Soloist	<i>"Twisted 2"</i>	Opera Columbus	2016
Tenor Soloist	Dubois: <i>7 Last Words of Christ</i>	Shreveport Symphony	2016
Tenor Soloist	Handel: <i>Messiah</i>	Shreveport Symphony	2015
Tenor Soloist	Stainer: <i>Crucifixion</i>	Shreveport Symphony	2015
Tenor Soloist	Beethoven: <i>Ninth Symphony</i>	FUMC Birmingham MI	2014

\*cancelled due to COVID-19

**JOHN RIESEN**  
**TENOR**  
CRITICAL ACCLAIM

**What You'd Call a Dream – Solo Recording**

"This is a disc of stories touchingly delivered and well told. . . the tenderness of Riesen's floated lines that seem to point straight to the heart. . . The Lehar shows. . . Riesen's excellent German as well as his clear resonance with this repertoire. . . This is a most appealing recital disc. The repertoire is carefully chosen, and the delivery fervent. Recommended."  
-Fanfare Magazine

**Glory Denied – UrbanArias**

"John Riesen as the Younger Jim went the distance to portray the fear, humiliation, and pain of the soldier's harrowing nine-year ordeal. Opera is a great medium for showing people in emotional extremis, and Riesen knows how to deliver vocally that kind of tenor heartbreak."  
-DC Theatre Scene

"Tenor John Riesen as the younger Jim Thompson, easily goes from the lyricism of a father who hung onto the mail from his family in his pocket when he was captured, including a misshapen paper star cut out by one of his children, to the dark tonelessness of a man kept in a tiger cage who creates the blueprint of a house in his mind to try to stay sane."  
-Broadway World

"John Riesen's substantial tenor remains strong through all the scenes in which he appears as Younger Thompson: from being kicked on the ground by his jailer to seeing the jungle for the first time at the end of the war with wonder and joy."  
-DC Metro Theater Arts

**Sweeney Todd – Michigan Opera Theater**

"tenor Jonathan Riesen's short, colorful appearance as Pirelli was both musically and dramatically satisfying."  
-Opera News

"Other characters are utterly remarkable here, such as John Riesen's Pirelli, at turns bright and funny and downright sinister, with a stunning tenor "  
-Encore Michigan

**Rachmaninoff Vespers – Oratorio Society of New York**

"Yet it was another moment, the moment when John Riesen's tenor voice rose literally from the *inner* voices of the choir that one realized how religion, mysticism and great art coalesced."  
-ConcertoNet

**Cendrillon – Opera Company of Middlebury**

"John Riesen was dashing with a brilliant tenor as Prince Charming. . . it was beautiful singing." -Rutland Herald

"As the pensive Prince Charming, John Riesen scored his finest impressions in his sensitive soft singing... In their big duet Ohse and Riesen gave the grateful audience the big operatic gift of thrilling all out climaxes. It was the stuff of fairy tales."  
-Addison Independent

**La Traviata – Gulfshore Opera**

"John Riesen has opera's Emotional Boy, Alfredo, firmly in hand. He is desperately in love and his heart is on his sleeve for the entire opera. Riesen and Valdes partner beautifully, and Riesen is note-perfect and powerful in his solos, an impressive tenor with dramatics to match. He gains power as the performance continues until his icy public confrontation with his lost love at her friend's soirée."  
-Naples Daily News

### **Glory Denied – Des Moines Metro Opera**

"Younger Thompson, the prisoner of war, was a physically grueling role, and John Riesen portrayed the character with heartfelt sincerity."  
-Schmopera

"His tour de force impersonation was well matched by his "younger" counterpart. John Riesen's "Younger Thompson" held the stage with a vibrant, focused tenor, and an impassioned performance of complete commitment and coltish deportment. Mr. Reisen bolted about the stage, flailed at his captors' abuse, repeatedly flung himself on the floor, and managed to do all of this while singing with secure abandon."  
-Opera Today

### **Candide- Chautauqua Opera**

"Voltaire's visionary *Candide*, or *Optimism* turned out to be an ideal demonstration of the talents, imagination, and resources of the Chautauqua Opera Company. . . John Reisen (the constantly wide-eyed Candide). . . Candide's accidental murders of Cunegonde's two sleazy alternating lovers, the Rabbi and the Archbishop, were hilarious"  
-The Chautauquan Daily

### **Soloist – Chautauqua Opera's Sing-In**

"John Riesen, a tenor who will assume the role of the title character in *Candide*, gave a commanding performance of "Maria" from *West Side Story* at the Sing-In"  
-The Chautauquan Daily

### **Tony – West Side Story Suite – New York City Ballet**

"The tenor (a guest) who sang Tony's aria, Jonathan Riesen, was also in excellent voice." -DanceTabs

### **Gaston – Beauty and the Beast – Shreveport Opera**

"The comedic bully, Gaston, is the foil to the couple. Performed by the irrepressible John Riesen, "Gaston" seemed to have almost too much fun in his role as a bad guy who is amused by the hot buttons he pushes."  
-Shreveport Times

### **Lensky – Eugene Onegin – Chautauqua Opera**

"Tenor John Riesen won the audience's hearts as Lensky...His farewell aria was robust and powerful, and the fact that he looks so young made the power of his voice a happy surprise and helped to gather sympathy."  
-The Chautauquan Daily

### **Soloist – Concert – Shreveport Opera**

"John Riesen sang a song called "What You'd Call a Dream" from the off-Broadway show, "Diamonds", a musical revue about baseball. The choice of the song was fitting because John himself was an all-state pitcher...he is surely hitting many home runs with his singing."  
-Shreveport Times

### **Alfredo – La Traviata – Tri-Cities Opera**

"John Riesen was a passionate Alfredo, well-received by the audience."  
-Broome City Arts Council

### **Soloist – A Night at the Opera – Texarkana Symphony**

"A fantastic, young, powerful tenor voice at the prime of his powers."  
-Texarkana Gazette