

## OVERVIEW

Top Gallant is as much a tale of a dream overtaking its dreamer, as of a boy chasing the impossible and cruel reality of a missing father, lost on a voyage. Pursuing his goal of recovery, Toby launches an inward journey of hope and belief, while outwardly confronting a rough New England world. Depending on the path marked by the director, the audience witnesses a see-sawing balance between these two.

Taking one path, the musical improbably springs from Toby's mind, setting him on an imagined journey from first scene through last. Taking the other, bypassing a dreamer's world, each of Toby's obstacles may be deployed as Dickensian realism against which Toby urgently strives.

Striking a balance, Toby's soulful dreams are framed with sharp reality, where only a few selected scenes in which Toby fantasizes his journey, are suffused with a young boy's burning imagination. Utilizing this perspective, the musical is paced between dream and reality, using as a fulcrum the innermost yearnings of childhood.

As for the musical's namesake, Top Gallant is both a vagabond object, and a ship, full-size, fresh off the architect's draft. Top Gallant is experienced by Toby, as well as by cast and audience, in two distinct forms: a small model, and at unexpected moments, a large, seaworthy vessel. One is discovered by Toby; the other is envisioned by Toby's missing father.

Top Gallant's two images contrast markedly, one reflecting the ambition of its discoverer, Toby, and the other of his father, its creator. When small, Top Gallant is rakish, exquisitely carved, and boasts a slash of color. When large, Top Gallant's image appears as something that strikingly haunts: turrets of glass splintered into red flames, perhaps, the ghostly idea of a ship rather than the thing itself.