

## Gabriel Byrne, Liam Neeson Team Up With Gerard Mannix Flynn on 'James X'



Gabriel Byrne

Getty

Actors Gabriel Byrne and Liam Neeson have teamed up with Dublin City Councilor and writer/artist Gerard Mannix Flynn, and with Culture Project, to present "James X." The piece explores what years of silence and abuse can do to an individual.

In it, a man (played by the author) waits to give testimony to an Irish governmental tribunal of inquiry. He hopes that telling the story will set him free. The show began performances on Tuesday, and runs at [Culture Project](#), through Dec. 18.

The author and Byrne met at the [Project Arts Centre](#) in Dublin when they were 20. "We are both committed to works concerning society, not just entertaining

it," says Mannix Flynn, who also runs his own company, [Farcry productions](#). "We've traveled different roads, but both of our skills and experience impact on this piece. Byrne is like the aircraft controller, bringing it in to land."

Mannix Flynn, a member of the New Independent party, has been investigating issues of sexual abuse since the 1980s. "James X" spans over 40 years, in an hour and ten minutes. "I'm not telling a story of romantic Ireland, but of a person who happens to be in this room. Inside of 20 seconds you'll be in that room with that person," Mannix Flynn says.

Although "James X" takes place in a theater, Mannix Flynn says it's not a dramatization, per se. He uses the dramatic form to "bring about a traumatic truth. The story of James X is made up of thousands of snippets and thousands of files. But it is a universal story, of a life lived."

Accompanying the work is a lobby display called "Impact," which portrays James X's journey from age six until the present. The display also relates to the author's work against child abuse in Irish institutions. There will be several public talks about the issues in the play, including a talk with [CCR](#) (Center for Constitutional Rights) on Dec. 11.

"James X" is presented as part of [Imagine Ireland](#), Culture Ireland's year of Irish arts in America.

*Culture Project is at 45 Bleeker Street, between Bowery and Lafayette.*

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