

**WHEN A STAR FALLS**

Issue-driven plays can be torturous. Watching flimsy “characters” express predictable, opposing points of view can feel like being respectively prodded by the wagging fingers of a well-meaning but self-righteous playwright.

When a Star Falls, David Cosgrove’s new play for Scottish Youth Theatre, is a brilliant exception. It’s gripping, funny and surprising, and there isn’t a single line about anyone having learned a valuable lesson. It’s full of well-rounded characters and carefully nuanced dialogue.

A group of friends in their late teens come together on a Friday night to gaze at the stars, meteors and each other. Three girls, three guys. Three local, three not. Unlimited potential topics for conversation, but before too long talks turns to immigration, integration and whether or not there’s intelligent life on Glasgow housing estates. Tension builds, voices are raised and huffs are taken, before a shocking revelation changes everything.

A modern-day morality tale, it approaches its subject matter head-on and poses some very big questions without ever compromising on entertainment.

Mary McCluskey’s lively production features strong ensemble work by its young cast, with Katrina Innes particularly impressive as refugee BB. The multi-media elements could perhaps be slightly more slickly incorporated, and the ending lacks punch, but in all other respects this is a cracking wee show from Scotland’s other national theatre.