Pedophilia, molestation, and love are the elements that combine and blur together in the controversial play, How I Learned to Drive, which will be opening in the Yvonne Theater on, Friday, Feb. 21.

Written by Paula Vogel, the play takes place in the 1960s and is the story of a young girl, Li’l Bit, who, from the ages of 11 to 18, engages in a sexual and emotional relationship with her uncle, Peck, as he gives her driving lessons.

Freshman Kim Hausler plays the lead character, Li’l Bit, who learns many life lessons the hard way as a result of the unconventional relationship she shares with her uncle.

“I play the part of the young woman from about the time she’s 11 years old until she’s in her 30s and pretty much grown up,” she said.

Director Miriam Mills (The Vagina Monologues), described the cast as being “absolutely wonderful.”

“They are so good. I am canceling rehearsals,” she said. “I never cancel rehearsals because I am a believer that the more you rehearse the better.”

According to Hausler, the show is unique because of its twisted love story and will take audiences by surprise.

“It’s really a story worth telling. I definitely think it’s going to upset and shock people. That’s part of what its intent is. But I also think people can look past some of that and just see it for what it is,” she said. “You basically see as they go back in time how in some ways she fell in love with him and how his obsession grew. It’s a play about pedophilia but it’s also a sad love story, a different kind of love story.”

The production is less than a hour and a half long and is not interrupted by an intermission, Mills said.

“You are not going to be stuck with a three hour tragedy. And believe it or not, it is built as a comedy. Is it funny? Some of it, a little bit. We are actually approaching it as a comedy,” she said. “It is a Greek tragedy. We have a chorus just like the Greek tragedy plays had. The chorus plays many different parts. They sing and dance, they pose, and they occasionally comment metaphorically.”

Hausler said that the story has a lot of ups and downs, but she hopes the audience will be able to appreciate that.

“It will disgust you at parts. It will intrigue you at parts. You’ll walk away from it really thinking about it and I think people will really learn something in the process,” she explained. “It makes you laugh, it makes you cry, it does so many things at once. It’s such a whirlwind.”

Junior Pat Barrar plays the role of Peck, and said that although he has had a lot of fun working on the play, it has been quite a challenge.

“This show is the most difficult show that I’ve ever done, in high school and at Rider. No character that I have ever played has really been this dark and difficult to perform,” Barrar said. “It’s one of the best shows, I think, that I have ever done. It has a very powerful message. People should come see it for themselves.”

Mills saw How I Learned to Drive performed in New York once in the past, and said that she had left the theater feeling furious.

“I realized that any play that gets me that pissed has to have merit. The play is presentational. It’s theatrical. I believe that the production in New York didn’t get it,” she explained. “I thought about doing it myself and maybe solving some of the problems that I saw in the play.”

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By Lacey Korevec
Assistant Features Editor

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Friday, February 14, 2003

How I Learned to Drive’ rolls to Yvonne Theater

By Lacey Korevec
Assistant Features Editor

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