

WEST SIDE

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Evans said students should not be turned off by the play's musical format.

"A lot of people will probably think about the West Side Story movie from the sixties when they see the ads," Evans said. "They might think the whole thing is cheesy, but it's

just like going to that Vanilla Ice concert. When it's live and in front of you, it's a good time. Just because a person hated the play on TV, they shouldn't stay away from the play when it comes into town."

"West Side Story" will be playing at Rudder Auditorium tonight and tomorrow night at 8. Tickets are available for both performances at the MSC Box Office.

Mortal Kombat: Annihilation finishes first this week

LOS ANGELES (AP) — *Mortal Kombat Annihilation* premiered atop the box office this weekend, but *Anastasia's* debut in the No. 2 spot was enough to give Mickey Mouse a run for the money in the Walt Disney Co.-dominated field of animated features, industry analysts said Sunday.

The big budget musical produced by 20th Century Fox earned \$15 million in its debut, enough to make it a formidable challenge to Disney's animation —

considered the single most profitable franchise in Hollywood history.

"I think it's great, it's wonderful, it's about as much as we could hope for," said Bill Mechanic, the chairman and chief executive officer of Fox Filmed Entertainment.

Disney, meanwhile, saw its re-release of the animated blockbuster, *The Little Mermaid*, drop to No. 5 from the No. 2 spot last weekend, earning \$5.8 million. In a weekend dominated by youth-oriented films, *Mortal Kombat Annihilation*, the second installment in a series of action-adventure movies based on the video game, earned an estimated \$17.5 million, according to box office estimates by Exhibitor Relations Co.

John Grisham's *The Rainmaker* had a strong showing, debuting at No. 3 with \$11 million in earnings, followed by the action-thriller, *The Jackal*, with \$9 million in its second week.

PEOPLE in the news

Weaver: Ripley not a statement

NEW YORK (AP) — Ellen Sigmour Weaver's plucky slaying space traveler returns in *Alien Resurrection*, is no book superhero.



Weaver

"I've played Ripley, an ordinary woman who is in extraordinary circumstances, and I don't give Weaver, 43, a Sunday News. "I'm playing a feminist statement; I'm playing the Ripley who has no one else to rely on. Like Ripley, Weaver wants to be judged on her talent alone. "It was never important for me to display my sexuality," Weaver said. "I didn't feel I had to prove I was to anyone."

Besides the *Alien* series, Weaver's film credits include *The Year of the Dragon*, *Dangerously*, *Death and the Maiden*, *Ghostbusters*, *Working Girl*, *Copycat*, and this year's *The Ice Storm*.

Giuliani on SNL makes for laugh

NEW YORK (AP) — Live from New York, it's Hizzoner.

Mayor Rudy Giuliani put on a dress, told a few jokes, took a dig from Janet Reno and dishes out to Joe Pesci as guest host "Saturday Night Live."

"New York is so safe, it's again safe to hitchhike!" the newly elected mayor cracked in his opening monologue.

Giuliani appeared as a gray-haired Italian grandmother, a bow-tie-wearing spelling bee announcer and, of course, as himself.

He took a few body blows from show's Reno impersonator but managed to deliver a comedy beating with a stickball bat to an ersatz Pesci for making Italian-Americans look in movies.

It was Giuliani's hosting debut and his second appearance. He and New York Gov. George Pataki opened the show in 1996.

Actress plays love interest on 'Ellen'

NEW YORK (AP) — In a career of typecasting going against type, Ellen Darr is back on TV playing a lesbian.

Last year, the happily heterosexual actress was a pregnant cop's lesbian lover on "NYPD Blue." This season, Darr is out-of-the-closet Ellen Generes' new love interest on "Ellen."

Work duties include smoothing the star on camera.

"That kiss was very sweet," she says in the Dec. 1 People magazine of the sitcom couple's first business something people haven't really seen on TV. To be part of groundbreaking television is incredible.

Darr played Officer Abby Cadabby, protective lesbian lover on "NYPD Blue" last year. Earlier, the 34-year-old actress played a string of girlfriend roles opposite Gene Clooney, Kelsey Grammer and Drew Carey on "ER," "Fraser," and "Drew Carey Show."

"I have more chemistry with Ellen than I've had with a lot of guys," she said. "I really feel I'm part of the scene with her. With the guys, I'm the 'chick of the week.'"

'Peanuts' creator celebrates 75th

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — "Peanuts" creator Charles Schulz turns 75 this week, still remembering the one who got away, his "little red-haired girl."

As a fledgling cartoonist in Minneapolis, Schulz fell in love with a red-haired co-worker and promptly proposed. She said no and married a fireman.

It was one of "those early days when you never get over," Schulz says in Sunday editions of the *Star Tribune*.

"I loved that little girl but her mother convinced her I would never amount to anything," said Schulz, who immortalized his first love as the little red-haired girl who frustrates the comic strip alter ego, Charlie Brown.

Schulz, who lives in California, turns 75 on Wednesday.

"I'll keep drawing as long as I can well — there's nothing else I know how to do," he said. "I enjoy — if you can use that word — drawing just like a pianist plays piano, a poet writes poems and a painter does watercolor. They do it because life wouldn't mean anything if they didn't. It's my life."

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