On Stage, and Off Bruce Weber

A joint venture may link film and the theater Canine actor in alary dispute Francis Ford Coppola, playwright.

Joint Adventure?

In an unusual, if not unique

follywood to the New York as agreed to underwrit ommissions over the n e produced and devel ons. The commission 12,000 each will go rights, the recipies pon by Don Scar rights Horizons estment, Mr. S ne play as a p roduction co ave a chang If Amblin ssured th t and econd di ddition, laywri associte pro ibuting to and, just as (The tradioping theater in what Mr. ansion of Playof producing films nce he said would st, it would generate rizons at a time when fit theater demands a ertain crea (In recognition of the ame thing, the N k Shakespeare Festival ecently hired Wiley nausem, a former William lorris agent, in the newly created position of irector of public affairs, whose primary responsiility is, in Mr. Hausem's words, "extending the fe of productions beyond their runs at the Public heater." That means pursuing partnerships with

ublishers and even merchandisers.) Second, Mr. Scardino said, it would help protect aywrights who have been burned by Hollywood who are simply afraid of it, because "the aywrights, for my money, are king in the thea-r," he said. "In Hollywood, they aren't." But now, said, the theater that helped develop the play for e stage would be creatively involved with adapt-

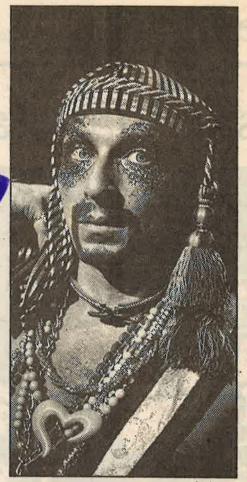
elevision broadcast companies, cable companies,

g the play for the screen.

And finally, he said, if the partnership grows, nopefully we can generate our own film projects, association with Spielberg," which would help to juvenate the film business in New York.

The agreement came about after Mr. Spielberg vice visited Playwrights last season and was opressed enough to offer to underwrite a new mmission. That, Mr. Scardino said, is when he alized: Hey, I got Spielberg on the hook here.

"So I wrote to him," said Mr. Scardino, an actor nd director of plays and television who recently rected his first feature film, "Me and Veronica."



One Actor, Two Roles

For a live-performance film, Ron Vawter will present his one-man show, "Roy Cohn/ Jack Smith," about two New Yorkers who lived with AIDS (Part 1 by Gary Indiana, Part 2 by Jack Smith), Sunday through Tuesday and Oct. 31, at the Kitchen, 512 West 19th Street, in Chelsea. The final performance is a benefit for the Kitchen. Information: (212) 255-5793.

"I said: 'I want to start Playwrights Horizons Films, and I'm looking for a partner.'

What advantage Amblin gains from all this is not terribly clear. Mr. Spielberg did not respond to an interview request, but Deborah Neumyer, Amblin's senior vice president for development, said: "Will we get new films out of this? Perhaps. But when one is in the business of developing, you develop a wide-net approach. This is actually an affirmation of Don and the belief that he'll bring us back material and introduce us to writers we wouldn't have found."

On the surface it all sounds good. But several agents, producers and other theater and film people consulted this week raised their eyebrows over what some viewed as an uneasy coupling of sepa-

rate art forms whose interests rarely coincide. (None would be skeptical for attribution.) Some wondered how Mr. Scardino would manage to run a theater and make films at the same time. Or why Mr. Spielberg, given his vast resources, didn't just give money to Playwrights Horizons without expecting something in return. But first and foremost was the worry that the interest of film making would intrude on or even supersede that of putting on plays at one of the city's most important nonprofit theaters. "I wouldn't want it to become Screenwriters Horizons," is how one person put

Still, confronted with the one concrete detail of the agreement — 10 new play commissions from an unexpected source - everyone said that that, at least, was inarguably a good thing.

A Dog Actor's Life

Purists, listen closely. When the cast album of "Annie Warbucks" is released on Nov. 16, it won't be Cindy Lou, the terrier mix who plays Sandy, barking to the music in the song "Somebody's Gotta Do Something." Piqued that the dog would not be paid a fee equivalent to that of an actor, the dog's trainer, Bill Berloni, wouldn't bring Cindy Lou to the recording session.

"The record company said, 'Because it's a dog, we'll offer a third of what the actors get,' " said Mr. Berloni, who said it took months to get Cindy Lou to perform the feat of barking on a musical cue, but whose arithmetic is shoddy. "I usually get. what the actors get." The actor's minimum is \$950. Mr. Berloni said he was offered \$250. (The Actors Equity contract specifies that anyone in the cast who "sings or verbalizes" on stage must be hired for the cast album. It doesn't cover animal noises or animals.)

Steve Murphy, the president of Angel Records, the company releasing the record, confirmed that he was never able to come to an agreement with Mr. Berloni regarding the dog's salary, but he said Mr. Berloni had insisted on more than the minimum. Mr. Murphy also said that time was short, and that Mr. Berloni made negotiating so complicated and difficult the company finally decided to make "other accommodations."

"It was my goal to, as quickly as possible, get a wonderful record out this Christmas," Mr. Murphy said. "So the train was leaving the station and

Sandy got left on the platform.'

Mr. Berloni, whose credits as a trainer include Asta in "Nick and Nora" and the original Sandy in the original "Annie," said this was just one more example of theater standards being lowered by "people who don't care about the art form who come in and bastardize it just to make a buck," He added: "How can they call this the original cast album? Is Sandy part of the cast?"

Coppola's New Bole

Francis Ford Coppola makes his debut as a playwright during the 52d Street Project's "Pivotal Roles," an evening of six plays written by theater professionals in collaboration with innercity teen-agers. Mr. Coppola and his collaborator, Victor Rojas, 13, contributed "Everybody Get on Uncle Sam's Bond Wagon," a 15-minute opus about a boy whose father is a songwriter. "Pivotal Roles" is scheduled for Oct. 30 through Nov. 1 at the New York Theater Workshop. Admission is free. Reservations: (212) 642-8444.