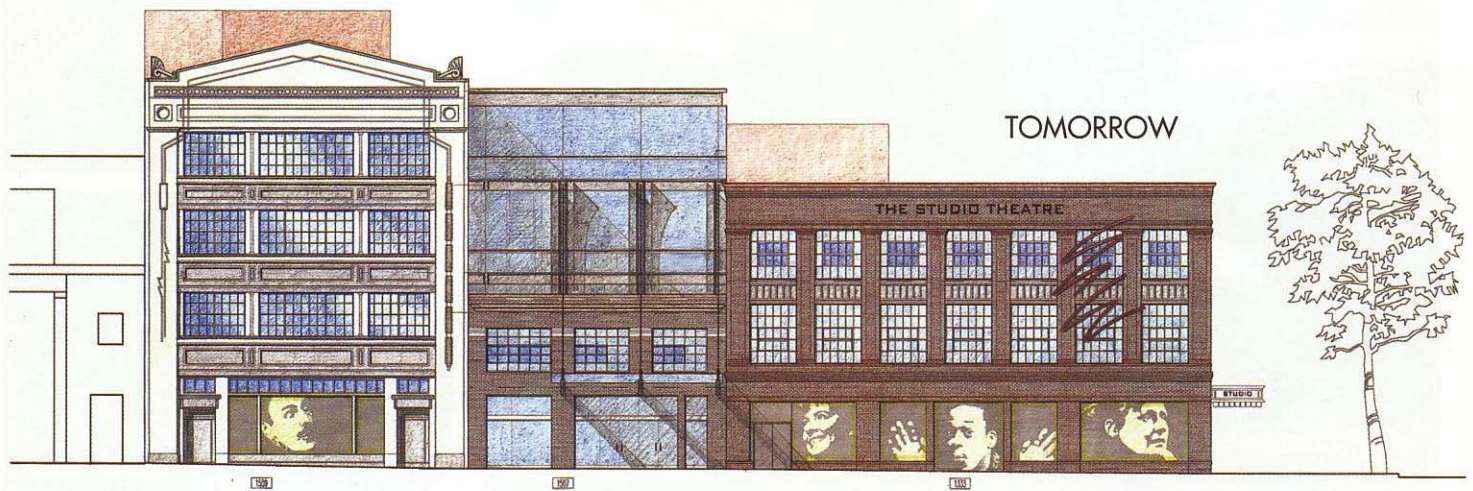


Fall 2004

# The Studio Theatre

1509 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW

*Bonstra Architects PC  
with theater designer Russell Metheny*



More good news for 14<sup>th</sup> Street: the Studio Theatre is expanding. It was the first theater group to stick its toe in on 14<sup>th</sup>, initially renting the building at the corner of P and 14<sup>th</sup>, later purchasing it and renovating the former auto showroom to include two theaters for simultaneous productions. Development on 14<sup>th</sup> has followed Studio's lead, as stores, restaurants, nightclubs, and housing developments have opened over the past few years.

Now, through the purchase of two adjoining buildings to the north, Studio will add two more theaters, a new 14<sup>th</sup> Street entrance with lobby and box office, administrative offices, classroom space for Studio's acting school, and a two-story glass atrium that will serve as the nucleus of the expanded complex.

The atrium addition is clearly contemporary but designed to unite Studio's three historic automotive-era buildings. "We wanted the atrium to be a very different place, like an ice cube sitting on top," architect Bill Bonstra, AIA, explains. Projecting structural steel frames organize paired sheets of glass, lit and glowing. "In a way, it's like the big windows of a showroom. People can look up and see what's happening."



Bonstra explains the process for combining new and old as weaving a geometric pattern. "We begin with an analysis of the existing buildings—their texture, rhythm, whether they're vertical or horizontal, their height. We try to create this kind of plaid. Plaid has an overall cohesiveness, but it can be very symmetrical. Like cubism, a Mondrian painting—you can emphasize different colors. This is a tapestry of colors and material thicknesses."