



# CenterStage

THE M A C M E D I A C E N T E R

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## Introducing CenterStage

CenterStage is the Media Center Application that allows you to use the digital content stored on your Apple Macintosh computer & play it in a more comfortable environment such as your living room using any standard Television set.

CenterStage is a free software project set to build a powerful and intuitive media center application for Apple's Mac OS X platform. The program relies upon the existing iLife software suite, notably iPhoto and iTunes, as well as Elgato's EyeTV software for Television show recordings by reading the media files you have organised in those applications. CenterStage also reads and plays back file types not supported by Apple in their suite of applications either by reading the files found in your Home directory folders or by organising them in the accompanying BackStage application

The user will then be able to easily browse their Photo, Music, Movie & Television collections they have stored, managed, and categorized presenting them fullscreen on your Television set which are accessed using a remote control.

CenterStage currently resides in 'Alpha Status' and currently features what we call a 'placeholder UI' which has been used to help the application take it's tentative steps toward the full Beta.

For more information and a full demo of what we hope to debut in the full Beta please visit the following webpage:  
<http://centerstageproject.com/the-future.php>

## Installing CenterStage

To install CenterStage simply 'drag and drop' both the CenterStage application and the BackStage application into your Apple Mac's application folder.



## Controlling CenterStage

CenterStage supports both the Apple Remote and your keyboard as default control methods. Other remote controls and input devices are supported where the ability to 'map' the buttons setting to the keyboard controls (listed below) are present.



### General Apple Remote Controls:

- |                                   |                          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Select An Item                  | Play/Pause Button        |
| • Navigate Up/Down                | Up (+)/Down (-) Buttons  |
| • Advance To Next Page            | Play/Pause Button        |
| • Return To Previous Page         | Left (Rewind) Button     |
| • Return To Main Menu             | Menu Button              |
| • Play Item/ Fullscreen/Slideshow | Play/Pause Button        |
| • Quit (From Main Menu Only)      | Escape Key (on Keyboard) |

### DVD Or VIDEO\_TS Player:

- |                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Cycle Through Audio Tracks    | <i>Not Available Yet</i> |
| • Cycle Through Subtitle Tracks | <i>Not Available Yet</i> |

### Fullscreen Video Playback Controls:

- |                   |                             |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Play or Pause   | Play/Pause Button           |
| • 'Jump' Forward  | Right (Fast-Forward) Button |
| • 'Jump' Backward | Left (Rewind) Button        |

### Fullscreen Photo Slideshow Playback Controls:

- |                  |                             |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Play or Pause  | Play/Pause Button           |
| • Next Photo     | Right (Fast-Forward) Button |
| • Previous Photo | Left (Rewind) Button        |

### Music Playback Controls:

- |                  |                             |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Play or Pause  | Play/Pause Button           |
| • Next Track     | Right (Fast-Forward) Button |
| • Previous Track | Left (Rewind) Button        |

### General Keyboard Controls:

- |                                   |                    |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| • Select An Item                  | Return Key         |
| • Navigate Up/Down                | Up/Down Arrow Keys |
| • Advance To Next Page            | Return Key         |
| • Return To Previous Page         | Left Arrow Key     |
| • Return To Main Menu             | Escape Key         |
| • Play Item/ Fullscreen/Slideshow | Return Key         |
| • Quit (From Main Menu Only)      | Escape Key         |

### DVD Or VIDEO\_TS Player:

- |                                 |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| • Cycle Through Audio Tracks    | 'A' Key |
| • Cycle Through Subtitle Tracks | 'S' Key |

### Fullscreen Video Playback Controls:

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| • Play or Pause   | Return Key      |
| • 'Jump' Forward  | Right Arrow Key |
| • 'Jump' Backward | Left Arrow Key  |

### Fullscreen Photo Slideshow Playback Controls:

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| • Play or Pause  | Return Key      |
| • Next Photo     | Right Arrow Key |
| • Previous Photo | Left Arrow Key  |

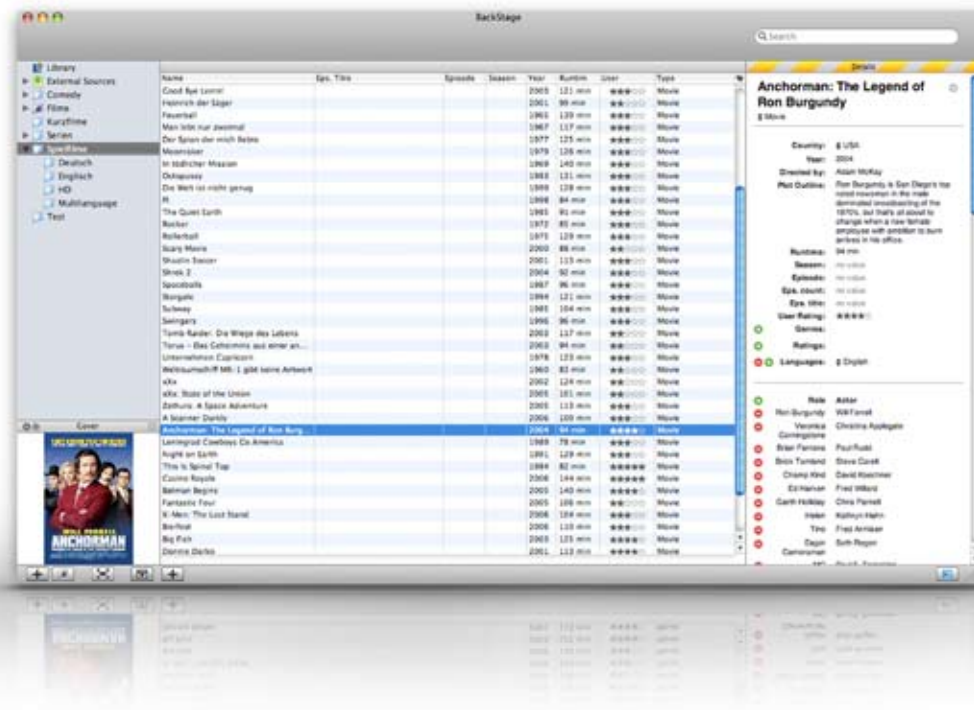
### Music Playback Controls:

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| • Play or Pause  | Return Key      |
| • Next Track     | Right Arrow Key |
| • Previous Track | Left Arrow Key  |

## CenterStage: Known Issues & First Aid

There are a few current issues that we know of during the time of this latest release. If you have any problems then please do not hesitate in posting on our Forum and more importantly our specialist bug tracking Jira client which can be found at: <http://centerstageproject.com:9090/secure/Dashboard.jspa>

- No preferences yet, except for resolution and skin
- The On Screen Display (OSD) is only implemented in a basic way. A fully usable and dynamic OSD will be implemented in a later version of CenterStage.
- Mkv playback might stutter in the beginning of a movie. Unfortunately this is caused by Perian's implementation of the mkv file format (the movie gets completely analyzed after opening). This behaviour is the same as in Quicktime player.
- Advanced WMV (also known as VC1) files may take a long time to load. HD resolution files might take up to 5 minutes until they can be played. This behaviour is the same as in Apple's Quick time player.



## Introducing BackStage

BackStage is used to organise and catalogue your Movie and Television Shows all in one neat interface that supports and adds more to the CenterStage media center experience. The BackStage application is used to organise different kinds of media that Apple's iLife applications do not support.

Therefore, BackStage is a supporting application and is not a replacement for iTunes or any of the other iLife applications. BackStage merely aids or provides an additional solution for organising and playing file types that Apple's iLife range of applications do not cater for.

BackStage currently organises both Movie and Television types. When you use CenterStage it connects to BackStage (as well as other sources and applications) 'pulls in' your media, reads the metadata (e.g. actors, directors, synopsis information) and allows you to play it back, pulling in the appropriate information directly from the BackStage database.

Using a Movie file for example, BackStage can help you add the synopsis, actors, directors and more, (the meta-data) by performing a web based lookup of that Movie. (see image right) The user can even add a poster or DVD cover with minimal effort. This information is then stored and the next time you use CenterStage you can see that same information you entered in BackStage on your Television set as it 'pulls in' this stored information.

The question you may be asking is why at first glance do we have an application that does some of what iTunes is doing with playback of Movies and TV shows? Why not just abandon BackStage and use iTunes? Well the answer is that many user's use a wide variety of formats most of which Apple and their software do not playback or support. BackStage helps cater for those who have Movies and TV shows in Xvid, Avi or VIDEO\_TS as a few examples.

In the future BackStage will be expanded and updated so that all your media is carefully categorized to provide organisation for other media types under different categories such as games or emulated ROM files as an example. We hope to also update the interface and underlying code base for the application soon.

## How CenterStage & BackStage Work Together

CenterStage and BackStage enjoy a kind of symbiotic relationship with BackStage acting as the host. It is important to remember that CenterStage and its User Interface are merely a 'Front End' or a means to access your media from various sources which are then presented on your Television set. BackStage is one of the sources that provides media content for CenterStage to access and read from. (see diagram below which demonstrates where different media is accessed from)

As mentioned previously CenterStage 'pulls in' or reads your media files from iTunes, iPhoto, Elgato's EyeTV software and selected folders on the Users Hard-drive. As the diagram above demonstrates CenterStage also connects to and accesses media that has been organised in BackStage.

It is now evident that BackStage is a powerful tool in providing carefully organised content, with media covers, synopsis information and all other kinds of 'meta-data' for file types not otherwise supported by any of the Apple iLife applications.

## Running CenterStage With BackStage

If you use BackStage or any of the other software sources to catalogue or organise your media, you will find it a more rewarding & all-together more sophisticated experience. Properly organised items in BackStage for example allow you to preview the 'meta-data' and covers for your media items on your Television set once CenterStage has been launched.

That is not all, BackStage even automatically places or 'tells' CenterStage to add TV series and episodes in the TV section and allows you to include files from all over your Mac, even those not in your Movies folder.

## Running CenterStage Without BackStage

The CenterStage application can be run without organising your media in BackStage or any of the other available sources. As an example, if you run CenterStage without using BackStage first, CenterStage will scan your user movie folder and read and 'pull in' all available files allowing for instant playback.

However, as these media items have no 'meta-data' (DVD covers, synopsis etc) none of this information will be present in the CenterStage interface.

## BackStage: Known Issues & First Aid

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- With lots of files in your User's Movies Folder startup can take very long because of the initial database build process - Dock symbol might even stop jumping. BackStage will start up after the process is finished. You might open Console if you want to see the process log.
- No multiple edits of information (meta-data)
- Cover does not show up after initial adding and switching back & forth. A restart of the application is necessary.
- Optical glitch when adding a folder in the source tree. Correct names show up after a restart of the application.
- Smart Folders may show strange behaviour.
- Changing the title of an item requires you to select another tag field for it to be saved.
- Changing of some tag fields requires you to select another tag field for it to be saved.
- Mkv playback might stutter in the beginning of a movie. Unfortunately this is caused by Perian's implementation of the mkv file format (the movie gets completely analyzed after opening). This behaviour is the same as in Quicktime player.
- Advanced WMV (also known as VC1) files may take a long time to load. HD resolution files might take up to 5 minutes until they can be played. This behaviour is the same as in Apple's Quick time player.



**BackStage**

- Movies
- TV Shows
- Organises EyeTV Recordings



**EyeTV**

- TV Show Recordings



**CenterStage**

CenterStage searches all available sources (left & right) and pulls in the various media from these applications, even reading and following the folder heirarchy and playlists you may have setup in the applications interface.

Don't forget that CenterStage will even follow the folder heirarchy and pull in media found in your User folders for instant playback.



**iTunes**

- Music
- Podcasts
- Music Videos (Coming Soon)
- Movies (Coming Soon)
- Radio Stations
- Audio Books
- TV Shows (Coming Soon)



**iPhoto**

- Photo Library
- Albums
- Slideshows

