A large conference room with a stage and audience. The stage features a large screen displaying three portraits of women. A woman is speaking at a podium on the right. The room is dimly lit with blue and red stage lights. The ceiling has recessed lighting.

BY PAUL BERLINER

*The Department of Justice's Conference on At-Risk Youth was held on January 10, 2006 at The Hilton Washington Hotel, with First Lady Laura Bush and Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales opening the conference. For this event, CPR used Encore to route five discrete destinations, three round "eye candy" screens and two 22-foot widescreens. (All photos courtesy of Jeff Monner, CPR.)*

# CPR AUGMENTS CREATIVE SERVICES WITH ENCORE

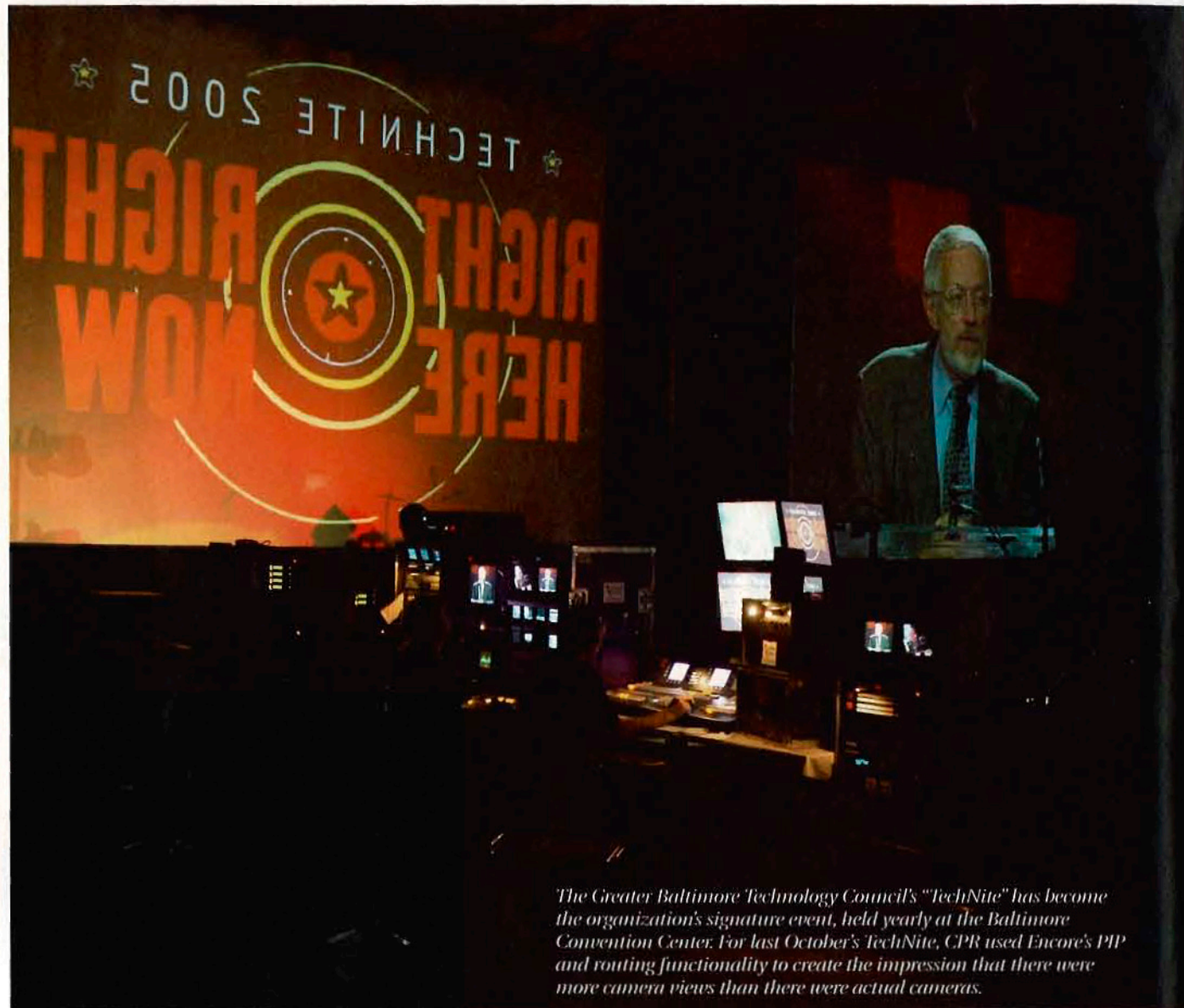
## A TALE OF FOUR SHOWS, ONE SOLUTION

Founded in 1988, CPR MultiMedia Solutions has grown from a small audio/video company to one of the premier full service event providers in the mid-Atlantic region. CPR stands for Computer Projection Rentals, which, as a data display company, originally represented the entire range of its business offerings. Today, however, its business model is far more comprehensive than the acronym would imply. Based in Gaithersburg, Maryland, CPR provides AV, staging, lighting, and conference services to a wide array of high-profile clientele from the entertainment, technology, corporate, and government sectors. With a staff of over 20, CPR's growth and success is due, in part, to its acquisition of Barco's Encore.

The expansion of CPR's in-house creative department is directly related to the addition of Encore. "Early on, when we started to see solutions that brought video, graphics and computers into a high-resolution domain, we thought the Holy Grail was upon us," comments Jeff Studley, president of CPR.

"We looked at several platforms, and considered the client base that might be interested in this technology. We did our due diligence, and Encore was the choice. What we find ourselves doing in our creative department is way beyond your typical soup-to-nuts projects. Clients already know how to prepare the clips and the PowerPoint presentations. What we help them with is preparation for a fully integrated large-screen presentation. We're very skilled at thinking in aspect ratios and manipulations that relate to the widescreen event world, it's a little jazzier, and a lot more animated."

CPR's creative department revolves around its in-house Encore suite, in which (if it's not already booked out on a show), the staff can combine an Encore controller, one or more VPs, an insert stage, and three Barco SLM R8 projectors in a "double-edge blend" environment. "Part of the challenge is educating customers to Encore's capabilities," says Studley, "so this is where we show producers what the system



*The Greater Baltimore Technology Council's "TechNite" has become the organization's signature event, held yearly at the Baltimore Convention Center. For last October's TechNite, CPR used Encore's PIP and routing functionality to create the impression that there were more camera views than there were actual cameras.*

can really do. More important, it's also where clients can put a show together without having to lease a ballroom for two extra days to do the programming. They can pre-plan a show, and when they finally get on site, there's a minimum of tweaks for the physical room."

The Encore is a format-independent presentation system that enables users to manipulate RGB, SDI, HD, and analog inputs simultaneously, scale sources, perform keyframe-based moves, and output to multiple destinations. Encore's hardware consists of video processors (each of which controls a single destination) and a controller, of which two models are available: the 64-input LC and the 24-input SC. CPR owns two controllers (one of each flavor), and four video processors (VPs). The system's modularity allows them to mix and match equipment based on the number of destinations required.

Four recent events highlight how CPR has used its Encore systems to solve numerous creative challenges.

#### **First Encore: The Africa Prize Dinner**

The Hunger Project's prestigious Africa Prize Dinner was held last October in the New York Hilton's ballroom. Event officials requested multiple widescreens to match the room's low and wide aspect ratio. However, content was drawn from libraries of 4:3 material, and 4:3 ISO recordings were also needed to simplify the editing of the final VNR (video news release). CPR's Encore allowed them to build 16:9 backgrounds that beautifully framed the 4:3 IMAG feeds, but which also handled the event's 16:9 computer and HDTV content.

Here, Encore's benefits included the ability to manipulate a mix of aspect ratios, easy captioning, and the ability to put different content on each screen. "In terms

of heights and the dais, the room really called for 16:9 screens," says Studley, "but event planners had competing requests. They edit on the desktop in their own facility, and that precluded them from shooting 16:9. They also wanted to use 4:3 vignettes intermixed over their widescreens, and Encore made that easy to accomplish on site, instead of in pre-production."

#### **Second Encore: Greater Baltimore TechNite**

The Greater Baltimore Technology Council's "TechNite" has become the organization's signature event, held yearly at the Baltimore Convention Center. For last October's TechNite, CPR used Encore's PIP and routing functionality to create the impression that there were more camera views than there were actual cameras. Using Encore, the three widescreen destinations each displayed different camera layouts, in addition to multiple PIPs and special effects. CPR also used Encore's keying, color shifting, and strobe effects to create some very exciting visual "tech."

"Working with a budget that allowed for two cameras, we were able to give TechNite some very cool looks," says Jeff Monner, CPR's senior account executive, "something that we couldn't have done with a standard video switcher. The theme was 'Backstage Pass,' and the audience actually entered from backstage, in between the three screens, and directly past all our video gear."

"By using Encore with its windowing capability," adds Monner, "we not only fed the Encore with the switched camera feed, but also the ISO feeds. On screen, we turned a two camera shoot into a virtual four camera shoot."

#### **Third Encore: DOJ, National Conference on At-Risk Youth**

The Department of Justice's Conference on At-Risk Youth was held on January 10, 2006 at The Hilton Washington Hotel, with First Lady Laura Bush and Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales opening the conference. For this event, CPR used Encore to route five discrete destinations — three round "eye candy" screens and two 22-foot widescreens. The round screens were beautifully

"WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS GOING TO SPEAK, A PERMANENT PIP ON SCREEN WAS ADDED, FOR THE ASL (AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE) SIGNER."

integrated into the set's design to give each speaker's session a different look and feel.

For this event, CPR relied heavily on the Encore's ability to control individual destinations, each with unique inputs and routing. "The first challenge with the DOJ project was to define and qualify what the client wanted to accomplish," states Monner. "Once we determined the actual requirements, we ended up putting together a very hip show for a government agency based around a

modest use of the Encore, far below the original budget. It's a tough line to walk with an agency, particularly when high



*The expansion of CPR's in-house creative department is directly related to the addition of Encore, according to Jeff Studley, president of CPR.*

production value gives the appearance that they're spending too much. However, with Encore as the engine, the job was both economical and a pleasure to watch."

#### **Fourth Encore: American Jewish Committee's 100th Anniversary Gala**

The American Jewish Committee's 100th Anniversary Gala Reception and Dinner was held on May 4, 2006 at the National Building Museum in Washington D.C., and with over 2000 guests in attendance, it was one of the largest events ever held there. Speakers and dignitaries included President George W. Bush, Deputy Prime Minister of Israel Shimon Peres, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

"When we originally started this project, Encore was not in the mix," says Studley, "but when the presentation requirements grew, that's when we recommended Encore. Additionally, when it became clear that the President was going to speak, we immediately needed a permanent PIP on screen for the ASL (American Sign Language) signer."

"With an event of this size and importance, we knew we'd lose some flexibility with a video switcher," adds Monner. "But with the abilities of the Encore, we met all the requirements without apology. It's one

of the unspoken benefits of the Encore — the ability to say 'yes' to client requests."

#### **Common Threads**

In speaking with CPR staff, there's a common thread that runs through each Encore-based event. "We've found that with a number of Encore jobs, and not just those that we've mentioned, we've been able to handle the last-minute requests much better with Encore," says Studley. "With Encore, the answer is much more often 'yes' than it would be with a standard video package. With the director and producer there, and with ideas flying around, last-minute requests are a natural outcome. But because Encore is there, suddenly you're making the client very happy by solving their requests and ideas. It makes for a much nicer production."

"We build a much better relationship with the clients that want to use Encore," adds Monner, "because it does require

more involvement on their part, it's very collaborative."

"Compared to the other presentation systems, Encore seemed to be the most modular and the most flexible," explains Studley. "From a system's standpoint, we have the ability to use our Controllers with other Barco devices like the ImagePRO and the ScreenPRO-II, for certain functions where a full VP isn't required. And because the wholesale rental houses have adopted Encore as the platform to stock, we can easily get extra gear when we have additional requirements on site."

"We've been a Folsom buyer, and we've liked their innovation and responsiveness to customer input," continues Studley. "We're also a longtime Barco projector and LED buyer, and we like their penchant for designing total solutions, not just boxes. Taking the two together, we're seeing a big picture plan for presentation systems, and as Barco works through the integration of Folsom into one entity, we look forward to seeing even more exciting additions in gear and capabilities."

*Paul Berliner is President of Berliner Productions in Davis, California, a company providing video production and marcom services to the broadcast and entertainment industries. He can be reached at paul@berlinerproductions.com.*

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