

A ballerina in a white lace tutu is captured in a dynamic pose against a dark green, textured background. She is leaning forward with her right arm raised and her left hand resting on her knee. Her hair is styled in a bun, and she is wearing gold ballet slippers. The lighting highlights the intricate details of her dress and the texture of the background.

The Creation of

iGiselle

NORA FOSTER STOVEL

Editor

*Classical Ballet Meets
Contemporary Video Games*

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Front cover: An image from the iGiselle prototype.

*Frontispiece: Alberta Ballet artist Mariko Kondo,
floating. Photo by Paul McGrath.*

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Preface

Revisioning Giselle as the Video Game iGiselle

THE CREATION OF iGISELLE: Classical Ballet Meets Contemporary Video Games is a collection of essays composed primarily by the members of the team that created the video game *iGiselle*, a contemporary response to the 1841 ballet *Giselle*. *iGiselle* is an innovative project that unites classical ballet and contemporary video games—unusual bedfellows—by uniting cross-disciplinary colleagues in a collaborative venture. Until recently, ballet has remained a relatively unexplored territory in the field of gaming, and video gaming has not played a very significant role in the world of ballet. This preface chronicles the inception and development of *iGiselle* from a personal perspective.

This project was initiated at a Canadian Association for Theatre Research meeting in 2012 when I presented a paper on *Giselle*, the quintessential Romantic ballet. Following my presentation, illustrated by video clips from a televised production featuring the National Ballet of Canada, starring Karen Kain as Giselle,¹ a production that ended, as always, with Giselle doomed to remain in the company of the Wilis—spirits of maidens, jilted by heartless lovers before their wedding day, who come alive at midnight at the summons

of their Queen Myrtha to avenge themselves on men by dancing them to death—an audience member inquired whether I had ever seen any other productions of *Giselle*. I replied that I had seen several productions, with various dancers—including Alicia Markova with the Ballets Russes, Galina Ulanova with the Bolshoi Ballet, Natalia Makarova with Mikhail Baryshnikov and the American Ballet Theatre, Veronica Tennant and Karen Kain with the National Ballet of Canada, and Evelyn Hart with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

She asked if any of them ended differently. I replied that *Giselle* was considered sacrosanct, and directors did not dare to change the ending. I subsequently discovered that there have been some recent postmodernist revisions, as Laura Sydora explains in her chapter “(Re)creating *Giselle*: Narrative and the Ballerina.” Most productions of *Giselle*, however, stick comparatively closely to the traditional production. For example, when the Alberta Ballet mounted its premiere of *Giselle* in 2014, they invited an expert from La Scala to stage it to ensure that their version was faithful to the original. Even daring postmodernist revisions end with *Giselle* relegated to the kingdom of the shades.

Much as I love these beautiful ballets, I began to critique them from a feminist perspective. Why does the ballerina always have to die, usually survived by her perfidious lover? American Romantic poet Edgar Allan Poe remarked, “The death of a beautiful woman is unquestionably the most poetical topic in the world.”² Granted the nineteenth century’s fascination with disease and death, why do contemporary audiences enjoy the spectacle of a woman’s sacrifice? Why do ballets from two centuries past that portray female victimization still fill theatres today? I also became intrigued by the paradox of the nineteenth-century ballerina and began to wonder how that ethereal, asexual figure remains a sexual icon, despite contemporary gender theories. Why do these ballets still enrapture twenty-first-century audiences when their portrayal of women is so far from what we say we believe women to be? I began to wonder if we could revise these misogynistic librettos.

I began to think: Why not? Why can’t we change the ending? Why must all these nineteenth-century ballets that still fill theatres today—including *La Sylphide*, *Giselle*, *La Bayadère*, and even *Swan Lake*—conclude with the death of

the ballerina, paralleling the fate of the diva of opera—as we see in Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor*; Verdi’s *La Traviata* and *Rigoletto*; Puccini’s *La Bohème*, *Manon*, and *Madama Butterfly*; and Bizet’s *Carmen*, to name but a few? In fact, Puccini’s first opera, *Le Villi*, composed in 1883, four decades after *Giselle* premiered, is a response to the ballet, in which Anna and the Villis take revenge on her perfidious love Robert by dancing him to death. Indeed, imitations began appearing mere weeks after the premiere of *Giselle*. After I discovered that Puccini’s first opera was inspired by *Giselle*, I invited Mark Morris, an expert on opera, to contribute a chapter on the topic. His research led him to discover additional operas and plays that he explores in his chapter titled “The Other Giselles: Moncrieff’s *Giselle*; or, *The Phantom Night Dancers*, Loder’s *The Night Dancers*, and Puccini’s *Le Villi*.” Clearly, the desire to rewrite this tragic narrative, including the desire to keep *Giselle* alive, a desire that also inspired the creation of *iGiselle*, began almost immediately after its premiere and continues to this day.

Death, however, is not the end for the Romantic ballerina. In fact, death is just the beginning, because the so-called “*ballet blanc*,” or “White Act,” following the heroine’s death, features the ballerina as an ethereal spirit, enhanced by a diaphanous white tutu that seems to float when she is airborne in leaps and lifts in supported adagio, pointe shoes that allow her to skim the ground in *bourées*, and wings that make her resemble an angel—notably in Act II of *Giselle* and in Act III of *La Bayadère*, called “The Kingdom of the Shades.”

As I considered revising *Giselle*, I recalled how some nineteenth-century ballets are being drastically revised: consider Matthew Bourne’s 1995 *Swan Lake*, the longest-running ballet production in London or on Broadway, which was featured in the 2000 film *Billy Elliot*, with an all-male corps de ballet of swans; or Bourne’s 2012 revision of *Sleeping Beauty*, in which the prince and the fairies are vampires; or Mats Ek’s *Sleeping Beauty*, in which Aurora is a heroin addict, and her four courtiers, who support her in the Rose Adagio, are all drug addicts. In fact, much modern dance, as well as contemporary ballet, is a rebellion against such Romantic ballets as *Giselle*. In “Ballet as Ideology: ‘Giselle,’ Act II,” Evan Alderson argues, “much of the tradition of modern dance can be seen as an ideologically grounded critique of the ideals

of beauty embodied in ballet. The saints of modern dance from Isadora Duncan forward have characteristically harnessed some ideal of the ‘natural’—that war-horse of ideological conflict—to ride against the dragon of artifice” (Alderson 291–92). And the same could be argued regarding recent choreography—as well as *iGiselle*.

Another serendipitous event catalyzed the inception of *iGiselle* when I met Vadim Bulitko, a computer science specialist with an interest in video games. As we compared notes on our various interests, I raised the possibility of creating video games that would allow the player to rewrite these tragic ballets to empower the heroines and keep them alive, rather than consigning them to death and defeat. He was intrigued by the challenging concept, especially because—even though choreographers, including Merce Cunningham, Bill T. Jones, and William Forsythe, have invested in computers and technology in their dance projects—video games have seldom incorporated ballet, and vice versa.³

Inspired by this collaboration, I assembled an interdisciplinary team of experts—Vadim Bulitko, Associate Professor of Computing Science; Pirkko Markula, Professor of Physical Education; and Christina Gier, Associate Professor of Music; assisted by graduate research assistants Emilie St. Hilaire from Art and Design, Sergio Poo Hernandez in Computing Science, and Laura Sydora, a doctoral candidate in the Department of English and Film Studies—all of whom have contributed fascinating chapters to this collection, along with Mark Morris and Wayne DeFehr, who joined the project at a later stage. I applied for and was awarded a Research Cluster Grant from the University of Alberta’s Kule Institute for Advanced Study (KIAS) in June 2013, and we all set to work.

We met regularly for one and a half years. Everyone agreed the ballet video game was a great idea, but we had a problem: most members of the team had never seen a ballet. So I began to educate the group about ballet by showing them film versions of each of five ballets—*La Sylphide*, *Giselle*, *La Bayadère*, *Swan Lake*, and *Sleeping Beauty*—introducing each ballet and discussing it with the team members afterwards.

Giselle, known as the ballerina’s *Hamlet* because of its dramatically challenging title role, particularly caught the imagination of the team—just as it

has enraptured audiences for almost two centuries. It was a natural, because the situation of an innocent young peasant girl, deceived by an aristocrat disguised as a peasant and condemned to death by betrayal and heartbreak, was a narrative crying out to be rewritten. *Giselle* is the ballet we love to hate and hate to love because, even though we are cognizant of gender debates and feminist concerns, it never fails to move audiences.

I was pleased personally, because *Giselle* was my first ballet. My mother took me as a child to see the legendary ballerina Alicia Markova, born Alice Marks in England, dance *Giselle* at Toronto's Royal Alexandra Theatre. We sat in a box overlooking the stage, almost close enough to reach out and touch her. When she balanced in a *posé en arabesque* before vanishing into the wings, she looked straight at me, and I fell in love—with the dance. The fairy had touched me with her magic wand, and I was fascinated by the ballet. Productions of *Giselle* never fail to thrill me, and the ending always leaves me moved, though perplexed. My chapter in this collection, "The Creation of the Romantic Ballet *Giselle*: The Ballerina's *Hamlet*," chronicles the creation of this quintessential Romantic ballet.

Just as I introduced the team to ballet, so Vadim introduced us Artsies to video games. We sampled *Jade Empire* and were appalled by its sexist representation of female characters portrayed in skimpy, tight-fitting clothing and in suggestively vulnerable positions. The computing science members of the team, even the female ones, were surprised by our reaction, so accustomed were they to such gender construction in video games. But we found that, as Pirkko Markula discusses in her contribution to this collection, "The Ballet Body and Video Games: A Feminist Perspective," the representations of the female body in ballet and video games actually have much in common, in ways that have inspired feminist critiques from numerous dance scholars. Such insights inspired the creation of *iGiselle*, a project that empowers the female protagonist.

I wanted our video game to give the player the opportunity to rewrite this tragic narrative, to keep *Giselle* alive, and to give her agency, allowing for possible "feminine endings" (see McClary). We began to design a video game using artificial intelligence that Vadim had developed with his graduate students. Vadim, who headed the team developing the video game, suggested

calling our video game *iGiselle*, as in iPhone or iPad. (We hope Apple appreciates the homage.) We met frequently to compose the narrative, discussing alternative fates for Giselle: she could live or die, seek revenge or prefer forgiveness; she could come back to life, or Albrecht, the faithless lover, could join her in death; the Wilis could defeat Albrecht, or the lovers could destroy the evil spirits. The possibilities were limitless.

I suggested a metanarrative, or meta-balletic scenario: Giselle is a young dancer who is in love with her artistic director and who longs for the starring role of Giselle but who is threatened by a heart condition that she has kept secret for fear of damaging her career and also by a rival who aspires to both the role *and* the director. Besides the likelihood that a contemporary setting would appeal more to today's audience, we hoped that this interface between centuries would heighten the contrast in attitudes towards women and encourage players to revise the heroine's fate. We employed names for the dramatis personae that would link them to *Giselle* but also connect them with the contemporary western world: thus Albrecht became "Albert," "Berthe" became "Betty," "Hilarion" became "Henry," and "Bathilde" became "Beatrice," but the eponymous heroine had to remain "Giselle."

I wanted a musical accompaniment that would evoke, but not replicate, Adolphe Adam's haunting score for *Giselle*. Because Adam's score, following principles of nineteenth-century opera, in effect dooms the heroine to death, I did not want to employ it for our game in its original form. However, I also wanted our score to echo *Giselle* as the Romantic background to our contemporary game. We invited our colleague Wayne DeFehr to compose a contemporary revision of Adam's score, which he did using an ensemble of software-based orchestral instruments filtered through a synthesizer. The sound was calculated to help players travel back to the mid-nineteenth-century setting of the original *Giselle* ballet, while the software simultaneously conveyed a contemporary atmosphere. In his chapter, "Renewing Adolphe Adam's Score: Creating the Music for *iGiselle*," Wayne chronicles the development of his score for *iGiselle*, reviewing his artistic choices, contextualizing his comments with reference to elements in Adam's score. The Romantic belief "that music was as crucial to a ballet's identity as the story" is as true now as it was then (Garafola 1).

Vadim decided to change *iGiselle* from a traditional video game to an interactive installation, an interface in which the player would select the desired narrative branching by performing balletic poses. This system has the added advantage of making *iGiselle* an exercise game, while reinforcing the balletic context. In creating *iGiselle*, the team employed a Microsoft Kinect featuring an infrared camera interface for pose recognition. They also employed an artificial intelligence (AI) experience manager that allowed the developers to anticipate players' choices. Thus the player, as well as the heroine, has options; and, in contrast to the passive spectatorship of a ballet audience, players can interact with their avatar, as Sergio and Vadim explain in their chapter, titled "Artificial Intelligence for Managing the Interactive Ballet Video Game, *iGiselle*."

Excited about *iGiselle*, but unfamiliar, as a literature specialist, with computerized gaming technology and the intersection of dance and technology, I referred to Sergio to contextualize *iGiselle* in relation to other computer games that involve ballet. In recent years, he explained, with the popularity of dancing video games, a few games, such as *Imagine: Ballet Star* and *My Ballet Studio*, have given players opportunities to imitate ballet dancers. While *iGiselle* shares a similar design with these games regarding the way they interact with the players—*My Ballet Studio* through the Wii Fit board and *iGiselle* through the Microsoft Kinect—the designers' motivations for doing so are quite different. The interaction is the core element in the design of games such as *My Ballet Studio*, while *iGiselle* uses it as an additional way to immerse the player, as the core of the design of *iGiselle* is its narrative, which allows the player agency while traversing it. Ballet-themed video games, such as *Imagine: Ballet Star* and *My Ballet Studio*, are constructed to make the player feel like a ballet dancer, but *iGiselle* focuses on exploring the narrative of ballet and allowing players to affect the outcome of the story through their decisions. Thus, *iGiselle* is unique, as there are no other ballet-themed games that focus on a ballet narrative. Moreover, *iGiselle* was the vehicle through which the research team tested new AI techniques to provide a more engaging narrative experience for the player. While there have been articles comparing, and finding similarities among, video games and ballet

as art forms, there have not yet been any attempts to explore themes found in ballet through a video game as *iGiselle* does.

I also consulted Pirkko, a physical cultural studies scholar, who helped me to further contextualize *iGiselle*, since she researches the role of dance in popular culture, in relation to the interface of technology and dance. She had developed an interest in interactivity in improvised performance, where the dancers' movements are tracked through digital camera technologies, and discovered a vibrant community of scholars—including Johannes Birringer, Scott deLahunta, Susan Kozel, Tara Mullins, and Stamatia Portanova—who are immersed in experimentations with technology and dance that can be traced back to the 1940s. Dance has become influenced significantly by the development of digital technology ever since dance-on-film and video-dance attracted attention in the 1980s. Merce Cunningham, in his experimental works, and William Forsythe, working with the Frankfurt Ballet, have long incorporated technology in their choreography. Other artists experimenting with interactive digital media include Yacov Sharir, Ellen Bromberg, Susan Kozel, Robert Wechsler, Lisa Naugle, Troika Ranch, Random Dance Company, Company in Space, Palindrome, and Chunky Move. Dance performances currently incorporate cameras, video projectors, microphones, sensors, synthesizer, computer software–designed motion tracking cameras, and wearable computers in dance performance. While Pirkko observes that much of this interactive work coming from the contemporary dance community focuses on performance, the *iGiselle* project, instead of focusing on performance alone, employs the dancing body/technology interface to create a prototype for a computer game playable by anyone interested in becoming involved in its narrative. Thus, *iGiselle* enables any player, not only dancers performing a piece, to experience the bidirectionality made possible by technological innovation.

Once the narrative options were developed, the team auditioned local dancers and held a photo shoot, with choreography by Nicole Papadopoulos, assisted by Laura, and photography by Vadim, with post-production led by Emilie. The visual element was followed by the auditory aspect, and the team auditioned local actors to record the voiceover for the narrative, again

directed by Nicole, with Emilie editing the recordings, assisted by University of Alberta undergraduate students and Edmonton high school students participating in Summer Internships. Once the video game was completed, Wayne created the musical accompaniment for *iGiselle*, and Emilie advanced our appreciation of the theoretical implications of the project with an in-depth analysis of *iGiselle* within the context of computer interaction design and new media philosophy. Her chapter, “Re-playing *iGiselle*: Dance, Technology, and Interdisciplinary Creation,” describes this process, explaining how *iGiselle* is unique in embodying ballet in interactive gaming. She considers *iGiselle* within the context of computer interaction design and new media philosophy, thus prompting reflection on ways of seeing beyond the default movements and viewpoints often adopted by game designers. Her analysis extends insights from *iGiselle* towards potential future projects that could explore further some of the valuable questions proposed by the *iGiselle* project.

On October 25, 2014, the interactive video game *iGiselle* was launched as part of a colloquium that included presentations by each of the team members—the origins of the chapters in this collection. A KIAS Dialogue Grant, awarded in 2016, enabled me to contribute to a number of symposia and book launches, in partnership with Alberta Ballet, the Association for Canadian College and University Teachers of English (ACCUTE), and other organizations. Although *iGiselle* was not made available for purchase, as the development and marketing of a video game costs vast amounts of money, the value of the prototype demonstrates the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration. *The Creation of iGiselle: Classical Ballet Meets Contemporary Video Games* provides possibilities to researchers in dance studies, game studies, AI studies, computer science, gender and women’s studies, and sociology, and we hope that it may inspire future interdisciplinary and collaborative projects.

Notes

1. The production was filmed by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in 1976.
2. Poe includes this statement in his 1846 essay, “The Philosophy of Composition,” which offers writers suggestions for composition, employing his own poem, “The Raven,” as an example.
3. *Bounden*, “an indie dancing video game developed by” the “Dutch developer Game Oven in collaboration with the Dutch National Ballet,” was released on iOS on May 21, 2014, and on Android on July 3, 2014, the same year that *iGiselle* was developed. (*Bounden*)

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Allyson Shewchuk, Luke Slevinsky, and Jesse Underwood, who edited all the photographs; Wayne DeFehr, who composed the soundtrack; dancers Aphra Sutherland, Andrea Ginter, Kandise Salerno, Nathan Lacombe, Charles Nokes, Kiera Keglowsch, Tara Gaucher, Rachel Ginter, Karly Polkosnik, Sierra Lacombe, and Justin Kautz; voice actors Dawn Harvey, Jessica Watson, Jeanine Bonot, Grant Eidem, Yvonne Desjardins, Sarah Beck, Dale MacDonald, Leah Beaudry, Nicole Papadopolous, and Larissa Thompson, who read the script for the soundtrack; Nicole Papadopolous, Kevin Hoskin, Emilie St. Hilaire, Laura Sydora, Sergio Poo Hernandez, Allyson Shewchuk, Luke Slevinsky, and Jesse Underwood, who recorded and edited the voice-over soundtrack. Thanks also are due to Sarah Beck, Susan Howard, Sunrose Ko, Alejandro Ramirez, Mark Riedl, Geoffrey Rockwell, Oliver Rossier, and David Thue, who all supported the project in valuable ways. Finally, I wish to thank Jean Grand-Maître, Artistic Director of Alberta Ballet, and Hayna Gutierrez, principal ballerina, who danced the demanding dramatic role of Giselle in Alberta Ballet's 2014 production, for their assistance in promoting awareness of this interdisciplinary collaborative project.

Introduction

Recreating Giselle for the Twenty-First Century

THE CREATION OF iGISELLE: Classical Ballet Meets Contemporary Video Games is a collection of eight essays by the research team that created the video game *iGiselle* with funding from a Research Cluster Grant from the University of Alberta's Kule Institute for Advanced Study awarded in June 2013: Nora Foster Stovel, Professor of English and Film Studies; Vadim Bulitko, Associate Professor of Computing Science; Pirkko Markula, Professor of Physical Education; and Christina Gier, Associate Professor of Music; plus graduate research assistants Emilie St. Hilaire from Art and Design, Sergio Poo Hernandez in Computing Science, and Laura Sydora, a doctoral candidate in English and Film Studies. This multidisciplinary team, comprised of specialists from the humanities, fine arts, human sciences, and computer science, collaborated on an innovative project that joined classical ballet with contemporary video games to create *iGiselle*, a ballet-themed video game, inspired by the original 1841 ballet *Giselle*. *iGiselle* brings this tragic tale of a nobleman's betrayal of a peasant girl into the twenty-first century by

allowing players to choose various options for the eponymous heroine that empower her and give her agency.

This collection of essays includes two elements. First, each member of the creative team—including specialists in narrative, music, and movement—addresses the origin and significance of the artistic elements of this project. Second, each member of the technical team that created *iGiselle*—including computer experts, a visual artist, and a composer of music—addresses a technical aspect of that creation: artificial intelligence (AI), narrative branching, and visual and musical accompaniment.

The Creation of iGiselle: Classical Ballet Meets Contemporary Video Games is therefore divided into two sections. The first section, “An Interdisciplinary Approach to *Giselle*,” contains four chapters that provide historical background to the project by synthesizing research on the libretto, choreography, and musical score of the Romantic ballet *Giselle*, followed by accounts of revised versions of the 1841 ballet in nineteenth-century fiction, plays, and operas and in late twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century ballets.

In “The Creation of the Romantic Ballet *Giselle*: The Ballerina’s *Hamlet*,” I outline the history and distinguishing characteristics of Romantic ballet in general and *Giselle* in particular as the quintessential Romantic ballet. I explain the inspiration, inception, and development of the libretto, musical score, and choreography that combine to realize the dramatic conflicts dictated by the libretto, including the class and gender issues that doom *Giselle*. I also provide an overview of the reception and influence of *Giselle*, which became the most famous, popular, and long-lasting Romantic ballet—one that is still performed all over the world today. The following chapters by Mark Morris and Laura Sydora explain the influence of *Giselle* on subsequent novels, plays, operas, and ballets.

I explain how *Giselle* was responsible for the birth of the White Goddess, the ballerina, and the Golden Age of Romantic ballet, 1830–1845, because the development of pointe work and supported adagio, augmented by the costume of white tutu and wings, plus gas lighting and stage machinery, etherealized woman and inspired the *ballet blanc*, or White Act, wherein the heroine reappears after death as a spirit. In Act II of *Giselle*, the White Act,

Giselle is initiated into the Wilis, ghosts of brides who have been jilted before their wedding and come alive at midnight to avenge their doom on men by dancing them to death.

The following three chapters analyze the effects achieved by *Giselle's* score and explain the influence of *Giselle* on subsequent novels, plays, operas, and ballets. In “No Feminine Endings’: Adolphe Adam’s Musical Score for *Giselle*,” Gier provides an historical overview of Adam’s 1841 musical score for *Giselle*, explaining how it accompanies the choreography in reinforcing patriarchal attitudes to women prevalent in nineteenth-century Europe by following established musical principles that, in effect, doom the eponymous heroine to death and defeat, while allowing her lover, the perfidious Albrecht—a nobleman who disguised himself as a peasant to woo her—to survive and return to his aristocratic life of privilege. Gier interprets and contextualizes Adam’s musical score, providing detailed close readings to highlight narrative and gender implications in the formal elements, such as key signatures, instrumentation, and orchestration. Specifically, she demonstrates how Adam utilizes particular musical techniques—including the symbolic role of instruments and harmonies to help convey characters and dramatic contexts, various harmonies and melodic gestures to convey ideas of gender, different orchestral textures to highlight relationships, and rhythmic characterizations to emphasize the narrative. Adam composes the ideal allegro and adagio accompaniments to the dancing of the lovers in the celebratory company of the medieval Rhineland villagers of Act I and the sinister sisterhood of the Wilis of Act II. To understand the need for a contemporary revision of Adam’s score for *iGiselle*, and to comprehend DeFehr’s essay on his musical accompaniment for *iGiselle*, it is necessary to consider Adam’s original score.

Morris, in “The Other Giselles: Moncrieff’s *Giselle; or, The Phantom Night Dancers*, Loder’s *The Night Dancers*, and Puccini’s *Le Villi*,” explains how these three works, one play and two operas, respond to the 1841 ballet *Giselle*. W.T. Moncrieff’s play, incorporating songs and a ballet to music adapted from Adolphe Adam’s score for *Giselle* by J. Collins, was first performed in 1841, mere weeks after Moncrieff read a review of *Giselle*, and published in 1842.

Moncrieff departs from Gauthier's libretto for the ballet by introducing new characters, varying the incidents, and changing the dénouement. Edward Loder's *The Night Dancers* (1846), originally titled *The Willis*, is cast in two acts, reflecting the structure of Adam's ballet, with two stage settings, but Loder deviates dramatically from Gauthier's libretto by casting the entire opera as a dream from which Giselle finally awakens, allowing for a happy ending. Loder drew the Giselle story not from the ballet, but from its original source, poet Heinrich Heine, via "Les Willis," an 1852 story by the French writer Alphonse Kerr. Giacomo Puccini's *Le Villi* (1883), originally composed as a one-act opera, titled *Le Willis*, includes dances—the opening village folk dance, the "Witches' Sabbath," and the Willis' dance at the end—although ballets within operas were in the French, not the Italian, tradition. In Moncrieff's play and Loder's opera, as in Adam's ballet, Giselle is a victim; in Fontana's libretto, however, Puccini's Giselle takes her revenge. *iGiselle* allows the player a range of options in concluding the narrative.

In her chapter, "(Re)creating Giselle: Narrative and the Ballerina," Sydora discusses the importance of narrative to Romantic ballets and video games, examining notable contemporary adaptations of *Giselle*: Fergus Early and Jacky Lansley's 1980 production of *I, Giselle*; Mats Ek's twentieth-century *Giselle*, wherein Giselle is incarcerated in an insane asylum, staged by the Cullborg Ballet in Sweden in 1982; Frederic Franklin and Arthur Mitchell's 1984 American reproduction titled *Créole Giselle*, by the Dance Theatre of Harlem; Michael Keegan-Dolan's Irish retelling, combining theatre, opera and dance, premiered by Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre at Dublin's Samuel Beckett Theatre in 2003; and, finally and most recently, a version of *Giselle* portraying Albrecht and Hilarion as lovers in a Vancouver production by José Navas, Director of Compagnie Flak in Montreal and resident choreographer with Ballet BC. Sydora reflects on gender issues in *Giselle* and the choices made in developing the narrative of *iGiselle*, positioning them in the context of feminist historiography and gaming narratology.

The second section, "Creating *iGiselle*," also contains four chapters, beginning with "Artificial Intelligence for Managing the Interactive Ballet Video Game, *iGiselle*" by Sergio Poo Hernandez and Vadim Bulitko. In this

chapter, the programmers explain their use of AI and a new computational model connecting play-style modelling to goal inference to emotion prediction to narrative selection, plus their implementation of the narrative planning module in an approach they call Player Appraisal Controlling Emotions, or PACE, which they applied in creating *iGiselle*. While AI techniques have been used in video games to control non-playable characters, including their movement patterns and how they react to the player's presence, there have been recent efforts to apply new AI techniques to other areas of video game design, such as narrative creation. Currently, most games involving narratives fall into two categories: either they include a single narrative, or they offer various possible narrative branches. In the first category the author has complete control and can create a complex narrative, but the player has no ability to influence the story and might feel disengaged as a result. In the second category players might feel they are influencing the story through their actions, but the story branches available are created by the author, limiting the number of options for the player and running the risk of creating storylines that are less amusing. The new narrative planning model PACE, described in their essay, addresses these potential weaknesses. PACE predicts the player's emotions in any given scenario and uses this prediction to adjust the narrative in order to keep the player close to an author-supplied target emotional curve. It thus offers players opportunities to influence the story through their actions, while creating engaging storylines. PACE was implemented in the creation of *iGiselle*, allowing for the gamer's satisfaction at giving Giselle the agency to act autonomously.

In "Re-playing *iGiselle*: Dance, Technology and Interdisciplinary Creation," St. Hilaire explores how embodied research such as the *iGiselle* project can provide opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborations. She describes the process of the creation of *iGiselle* as the team implemented emotion-modelling techniques to map player styles and explains how using a Microsoft Kinect as a game controller requires players to interact with the narrative via ballet-inspired, full-body poses. She then situates the project within a theoretical framework that highlights relevant intersections between *iGiselle* and current literature pertaining to the body in dance and