*(David Wampach's interview, by Chris Haring)*

- What did you think about danceWEB before? What do you think after you have been danceWEB mentor?

Before being a mentor, it seemed to me that danceWEB was a great opportunity for many artists to get an intensive experience, with many classes and workshops, to have the opportunity to see many shows, to meet other artists, teachers, and their peers. I never had the chance to do danceWEB, actually I never tried, but from people I know who did it, I understood that it was an important moment in their career.

After being a mentor, I realize how important this experience is for the webbers. I also felt that we could invent, create, discover other possibilities, while part of a group searching together. I have chosen to consider the webbers more as artists than students. It is perhaps obvious to say but it makes a difference.

- Did your collaboration with Chris work? Would you suggest a different mentoring? Is it necessary to have a „mentor"?

I was very surprised to be invited by Chris, because we didn't know each other. I just knew from Karl that he also made a *Rite of Spring*. So when I received the invitation through Rio, I was honored and I immediately accepted. Therefore I was not part of the very beginning, the selection process. Did the collaboration between us work? Yes and no. Thank God. If we were totally on the same page, it would have been a shame and a waste of time. During the preparation, when we were exchanging via emails and Skype meetings, I felt so much respect and listening, that I could trust the process to move forward. It was a way to get to know each other, to see how and what we may propose to the webbers. When we started with a three-day *Introductory Workshop* preceding the workshop festival, we were searching a way to begin, to introduce each other, to dance together, to talk, to have brunch… From the beginning, it got clearer that Chris and I had a different approach, but in the end, we always found a way to separate our visions and let the webbers choose. So it was never contentious. We never fought, even though arguing is not a problem. But in this specific case, it seems that our disagreements never got to the level of a conflict because it wasn't about Chris and me, but about the webbers. We were there to help, to support, and to listen to them. So yes, I do think that it's necessary to have mentors for danceWEB, by inventing this role, according to the desires and wishes of

the people who take this responsibility. I was very inspired by the definition and the origin of "mentor" in Antiquity… (sorry, it is in French, I was trying to find the English page, but it wasn't complete):

**mentor**, nom masculin

**Sens** Guide. Conseiller avisé et expérimenté **[Littéraire]**. **Synonyme** inspirateur

Dans la mythologie grecque, **Mentor** est le précepteur de Télémaque et l'ami d'Ulysse. Par assimilation, un **mentor** est un conseiller expérimenté, attentif et sage auquel on fait entièrement confiance. Il ne faut pas confondre "mentorat" et "coaching" qui sont deux concepts différents.

Un **conseiller** est une personne qui donne des conseils, puis également, dans un contexte institutionnel, une personne qui siège dans un conseil. Un synonyme est **mentor**, dans le cas d'un accompagnement personnel (terme recommandé en France à la place de l'anglicisme *coach*).

De l'anglais *coach*, lui-même dérivé du français *coche*, d'abord au sens de « carosse, voiture », puis en argot universitaire « répétiteur, entraîneur » en passant par *coach manager*, gestionnaire du parc automobile d'un groupe musical, qui s'est ensuite adjugé d'autres fonctions.

1. *(Sport) (Anglicisme)* Personne entrainant une équipe sportive ou un sportif.

2. *(Par extension) (Anglicisme)* Personne conseillant et accompagnant des individus ou des groupes sur le plan personnel, professionnel etc.

- Good, bad, exciting, surprising moments for you as mentor?

During the first days, I mentioned to the webbers that I didn't want to ask for an obligatory one-to-one discussion during danceWEB, but I would still be available for whoever wants to share and meet in a more private way. I had that kind of encounter with approximately half of the group. It could have been a talk at the Arsenal on the grass, before or after a show in the city, having a drink or a meal somewhere. I really appreciated those talks, it was a great way to get to know each other. The topics could be their experiences in the danceWEB workshop, but most of the time, it went much beyond that question. They were expressing their issues in their career, how to develop their work, where to live, what kind of daily body practice they need, how to combine love affairs with moving so much for auditions and touring.

One exciting moment:
At the beginning of danceWEB, I was still defining my position as a mentor for myself, passing through different classes and workshops, hanging around at the Arsenal, trying to be available. Then I chose for the second week to participate in Keith Hennessey's workshop with about a dozen webbers. I was wondering before taking that choice if it was "right" to do that for the whole week, 6 hours per day, but actually, that was the best choice I made. While we were experiencing the workshop, I was sharing with the webbers more than ever, by working together.

One surprising moment:
During the Skype meetings with Chris, I suggested that we find a space for the webbers for "doing nothing". It was more a way to provide a context for them to be together, starting with a proposition of "emptiness" to see what could arise from that. Rio found the Theatre X, a space that could be available for the whole festival. The fact that it was a theater needs to be made clear. When we went there for the first time during the three-day *Introductory Workshop*, we felt a lot of stress from some of the webbers. They were wondering why and how they could use that space. It was quite an intense moment and discussion. Some of them said that they had nothing to share or to show, some were very excited and happy with that idea, seeing a way to get to know each other better. For the 1<sup>st</sup> Salon, we proposed them to self-organize and to decide what kind of evening they would like to share in this specific space. The result was a nice evening during which we passed from video presentations to interactive proposals, like being together, naked in a dark room.

- In retrospect, do you think that you did it well? Or if you had to change something, what would you do?

If I had to change something, it would be just one thing: I wouldn't choose to present my work, because it didn't feel right. I was saying that I appreciated a lot to be part of Keith Hennessey's workshop, because I felt part of a situation in which we were all searching. I was also glad to propose my own workshop, during which I could get to know better some of the webbers. But showing my piece wasn't pleasant, perhaps also because it was a solo that I was performing. In retrospect, it wasn't necessary.

Otherwise, if I did it well? It would have been different in another year, another time, with a different group, with a different co-mentor. So for this time, that was the way we could handle it. In this case, I could appreciate a lot the listening, the respect, the understanding. I was a bit scared about the idea of a community, but at the end, that wasn't fake. I felt honesty and true sharing.