Interview with Luna Steelheart

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**Connor McDonald:** Alright, is it recording for you?

**Luna Steelheart:** Um, wait. Meeting is being recorded, continue. Alright, yes, yeah, it shows it is recording.

**Connor McDonald:** Alright. Well, hi. How are you today?

**Luna Steelheart:** I’m doing great. How are you?

**Connor McDonald:** I’m doing fantastic. So, would you like to say your drag name, your age, and where you are a performer at?

**Luna Steelheart:** Um, so, my name is Luna Steelheart. Um, that is Luna as in the Spanish word for moon, steel as in the metal and heart as the organ. I’m 22 years old, and I don’t really have a particular place that I am tied to performing. I mostly perform in Kansas City and in Columbia, Missouri.

**Connor McDonald:** Perfect. Why did you choose your name for drag?

**Luna Steelheart:** So, actually that’s a funny story, and I’m glad you asked. Because for me, I’ve always been drawn to the name Luna. Luna has always been a name of mystery, a name of the night, and I've never felt so connected to the night as I have with the name Luna. It represents the moon, and all things under the stars. They were... it's about partying and having fun and all of the fun things that are tied to the moon.

As Steelheart, it was actually a name that was given to me by a friend of mine back in high school. And originally, my name was going to be Luna Lovegood. So, my lack of knowledge, I didn’t know that Luna Lovegood was already a character created in Harry Potter. So, from there, it became like, okay, well now I need to find a new last name. And somebody goes, “Well, why don’t you choose Steelheart?” And I was like, “Steelheart, like, what do you mean?” And she goes, “Oh well, you know, steal their hearts away or your heart can be as cold as steel.” And I was I was like, “Dual meaning, I love it.” So, we just, kind of, took on that name, and it’s been, kind of, an adventure with it as well along the, uh, the four years that I’ve been doing that.

**Connor McDonald:** Oh, I love that. So, you are originally from the St. Louis area, is that correct?

**Luna Steelheart:** That is correct. I got my start... uh, my very first performance was at none other than St. Charles Community College. And then my second performance, but my first performance at a bar, was actually at Attitudes Nightclub back in 2017. And that’s where I got my start. I had been doing drag there for about a year and a half to almost two years, until I moved to Kansas City and, kind of, moved around a little bit there further.

**Connor McDonald:** So, why did you move out to Kansas City? Was it for a job? Was it for drag?

**Luna Steelheart:** A little bit of everything. I, honestly, moved out to Kansas City for a fresh start. I knew the drag scene was a lot bigger. I knew I’d be able to make a better name for myself, and all of those dreams have come true. Kansas City was a place where I had some family and some friends and decided to move... move out there to better my life. But ultimately, it’s been the betterment of my drag as well.

**Connor McDonald:** Do you think that the drag scene is different out in Kansas City than it is in St. Louis?

**Luna Steelheart:** For sure. There’s definitely a different style of everything, especially when it comes to geolocation. I’d have to say in St. Louis there’s a lot more freedom of artistic ability. As far as in St. Louis, there’s a lot of different types of drag that I haven’t seen out in Kansas City yet, whether it be that I haven’t gotten to discover that part or actually be part of that... part of the drag community, is up in the air as to if I have gotten to work with these types of people. But in St. Louis, there is definitely a more artistic scene when it comes to, um... there’s, like, a lot more cosplayers, there’s a lot more, um, like, ghoulish, um, like, creepier style drag that might be on Dragula. And here out in Kansas City, there’s a lot more pageant, there’s a lot more club, there’s a lot more artistry in the sense of seeing drag as a purest art form. But there isn’t as many drag kings out in Kansas City as there are in St. Louis.

**Connor McDonald:** I have seen a few drag kings in St. Louis. So, how were your first...?

**Luna Steelheart:** Yeah, there... there's a lot more drag... oh, sorry.

**Connor McDonald:** You go first.

**Luna Steelheart:** I was going to say, there’s a lot more drag kings in St. Louis than there are in Kansas City, for sure.

**Connor McDonald:** Interesting. How were you first exposed to drag?

**Luna Steelheart:** Honestly, the way it started for me might have been a lot different than a lot of other people. So, for me, it actually started at a very young age, I used to... me and my sister used to be roughly around the same body size and shape. And so, I used to go around in her dresses and play dress up with her. And I put on... you know, masculinity and femininity are nothing more than social constructs.

And so, from there, I, kind of, explored it a little bit further. And it wasn’t until high school that a friend of mine had shown me none other than RuPaul’s Drag Race contestant from Season 5, Alyssa Edwards. And I kind of found a little bit more connectivity in that. I started to research a lot more, started learning the backgrounds and truly discovering that that’s who I was. Because for a while, I started to contemplate the idea if I were trans or if I were genderfluid, nonbinary, or if I was just a drag queen who very much enjoys expressing, expressing artwork through gender identity.

**Connor McDonald:** So, drag has become a form of self-expression in a way?

**Luna Steelheart:** For sure. I always, uh... there was a quote from Dragula that I truly resonated with, and I, I have said it time and time again since I’ve seen it. But it’s, “Drag is art, art is subjective, and nobody... it's nobody else’s place to judge." It is truly the artist’s form of expression that allows you to resonate with the art form itself.

**Connor McDonald:** I like that. How would you describe your... [overtalking]. How would you describe your drag right now?

**Luna Steelheart:** I would consider it to be more on the side of witchy glamor. I like to describe it that way because I find beauty in dark things, whether it be, oh, you know, the tale of a witch or a poltergeist story or, you know, some type of monster, there’s always a beauty behind it. Like the story of Medusa, it's, uh... but it’s portrayed as a [unclear] the feebleness of men. Uh, it's that there’s not really a monster in everybody, and that’s the beauty behind it all. It's that we are all in some form a monster, and there’s a beauty to it.

**Connor McDonald:** That’s very beautiful. So, would you define witches and monsters to be influencing your drag? Or are there other people or other aspects that influenced your drag?

**Luna Steelheart:** Um, see, for myself, I find artists through my music that would allow me to feel inspired. But as far as, like, my look and everything else, I don’t really draw inspiration from another person, just because my own look comes from my own interpretation of who has inspired me. So, for instance, if I were to do a Lady Gaga number, which, she’s my... I’d say more main influence. If I were to do a Lady Gaga number, I would do something that I feel I [inaudible] translate Gaga as my own artistic [inaudible] somebody else and go, “Okay, they did [inaudible], kind of, where it’s evolved from.”

**Connor McDonald:** I like that. So, do you remember your first time in drag?

**Luna Steelheart:** I don’t think I could ever forget it. It was a, a very hot day on June 17, 2017, and the reason I remember that date is because that is Luna’s birthday. I was actually out of pride for St. Charles, and I was wearing nothing more than a, a dress that was covered in glitter and a slit up the leg. And I was wearing a wig that I had gotten off of from Wish, and I had no more makeup than, you know, an everyday cisgendered woman, um, because we... I didn’t know what drag was. And so, I didn’t really have my eyebrows all the way glued down. My wi—my wig would, kind of, slide around. My, my body didn’t quite have the shape that it would today. But, of course, I would agree that, you know, everywhere has got its own start and, you know, it’s moments like that that we look back at where we began, and just see how far we’ve come.

**Connor McDonald:** That’s very inspiring. So, how did your friends and family feel about drag? Or did you care what they think?

**Luna Steelheart:** Say that last part again?

**Connor McDonald:** Did your friends and family feel okay about you doing drag or did you even care about them or care about their opinions?

**Luna Steelheart:** Um, at the... in the beginning, there was a lot of... uh, what’s the word I’m looking for? Apprehension.

**Connor McDonald:** Okay.

**Luna Steelheart:** A lot of people, kind of, looked at me a little different as in like, “Why would you want to do this? Is this your way of wanting to become a woman? Is this you telling us something that... through another style of speaking? Like is this a way to lighten the punch?" And a lot of friends were starting to think that I was a little obsessive with my drag, because at first [inaudible] it demands all of your attention, and at the time they were expressing who I... and, and in its truth and in its entirety, I was expressing myself in ways that they haven’t quite understood yet because that’s all they’d known is just the press version of me. And, you know, I completely opened up.

And at first, with my family, like, there’s only a few family members that know, still, to this day. But for my immediate family that does [inaudible] and data first, they were like, “All right now, we support you during this. You’re an adult now. Just as long as, if you do make up in the house, that you keep it down in your room. You don’t come up in full face. You don’t... if you’re getting ready for a show, you know, don’t get ready here, get ready at a friend’s house, and then don’t come home with makeup on." Because it would attract the neighbors, and they didn’t want to have to answer questions for neighbors that they weren’t ready to fully answer, which I understand and respect fully.

**Connor McDonald:** So, it seems more that your family was more worried about their image than your image.

**Luna Steelheart:** In some aspects, yes. And they were also afraid that me walking the streets looking the way I did was, kind of, a call out to the people who might be a bully and try to mug me or beat me or, ultimately, kill me. And that was their biggest fear, because my mom’s already lost one child. She did not have any intentions to lose another.

**Connor McDonald:** Oh, I’m so sorry.

**Luna Steelheart:** That’s all right, I actually embrace my sister, and I actually wear her as part of my body for the rest of my life. I have a tattoo on my right wrist that allows her to be with me every single day.

**Connor McDonald:** That’s beautiful.

**Luna Steelheart:** For sure.

**Connor McDonald:** So, how has COVID-19 affected your drag?

**Luna Steelheart:** For some, it hindered their ability to perform more. Mine, it gave me the ultimate green light to flourish and grow and prosper within it. Um, because if you’re not keeping up with it, you’re saying behind the scenes. So, that’s the way I’ve always looked at it, is, um, I had... towards the beginning of drag, um, right before it hit, I had one performance in Kansas City on my 21st birthday. And then all the nightclubs went down, and I wasn’t able to perform for a couple weeks. And then an old friend of mine. Anthony Plogger, actually hit me up and messaged me and was like, “Hey, um, how would you feel about doing online shows? You know, you have a place to stay. And if there’s any information, we can give you, it's yours.” And I was like, “Of course. I’m in.”

And so, I’ve been performing there ever since, and they’ve accepted me as part of the family. And, you know, they don’t even... an they don't even call me an out-of-towner... or an out-of-towner or out-of-town performer anymore. They call me a hometown performer because of how often I had got to perform there. And they’ve really seen my drag grow and change and evolve into what it is today. And I couldn’t be more grateful than how I currently feel.

**Connor McDonald:** That’s good. Do you get any reactions from people who see you do drag or see you doing drag during COVID?

**Luna Steelheart:** Do you mean as far as fans or...?

**Connor McDonald:** As far as fans or people saying that it might be a bad idea because of the pandemic?

**Luna Steelheart:** Um, I’ve had a lot of people that are not super familiar with the art form tell me, “Oh, you should be careful, you know, at least always wear your mask,” you know, just give me all the precautions that I already knew. [Coughs] Sorry, I had a dry throat. Um, they had given me a lot of precautions to live by, that some people urged me not to. But I was, like, "Keeping me away from performing is like taking a fish out of water and telling it to breathe." So, I mean... and a lot of my fans that were coming to the shows, I created a larger fanbase, you know? A lot of people love that I do it; they’re thankful that they actually have an outlet to be able to be entertained and feel connected with in a time where connectivity and entertainment are, kind of, hard to come by due to the effects of COVID-19.

**Connor McDonald:** That's understandable. I’m glad that you are still able to do shows, and that you have been precautious.

**Luna Steelheart:** Always. [Laughs]

**Connor McDonald:** So, do you have a drag family? Because I know that in many aspects of the world, a good drag queen usually partakes in having a families, a drag mother.

**Luna Steelheart:** Yeah, of course. Um, towards my start, I did have a drag mother. I no longer have a drag mother, and I would like to keep that a little private, just because we, we did have a falling out but, um, you know, the future is always bright. Um, but, no, I have actually taken on my own drag daughter. Her name is Regina Steelheart. She’s my pride and joy. She makes me happy; she makes me smile. And she always keeps me motivated very much as a mother and as a best friend in, um, you know, just every sense of the word.

And Regina’s actually got a new bouncing baby da... or baby sister on the way. Uh, her name's Zelena Steeheart. And we're growing it from there and gonna see how it works and, you know, what works for us, and so on and so forth. So, so, yeah, I’m very excited. I’ve got lots of sisters, a couple brothers, uh, you know, they, they all just keep me active and motivated.

**Connor McDonald:** So, you have a big family then?

**Luna Steelheart:** Oh, for sure.

**Connor McDonald:** That's glad because drag communities are often very helpful, and I’m glad to see that pertaining to your family as well.

**Luna Steelheart:** For sure. For sure.

**Connor McDonald:** So, how would you identify yourself in and out of drag, if you are, are okay with it, maybe specific pronouns?

**Luna Steelheart:** Oh okay. Yeah, in drag, I’m strictly she/her/hers. The way I look at it is, is I put a lot of work in to look like a... or to represent the females of the group. So, you know, I like to be referred to as such. But out of drag, I am open to any term, um, whether it be she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, he/him/his, as long as it’s not hyper masculine such as dude, sir, bro, man, and buddy. Like, those are just ones that, kind of, I just don’t feel like I relate to those terms. I don’t feel like they represent me very well, however it wants to be worded, but I, I just don’t relate to those words and... but those are my pronouns.

**Connor McDonald:** That makes sense.

**Luna Steelheart:** Hmm?

**Connor McDonald:** I said that makes sense.

**Luna Steelheart:** No, I said, “Uh-huh.”

**Connor McDonald:** Oh, okay. [Laughs]

**Luna Steelheart:** [Laughs] My bad, I’m sorry.

**Connor McDonald:** Oh no, you’re totally fine. And obviously, not to have any terms that would be disrespectful to you as well.

**Luna Steelheart:** Oh, of course, yeah.

**Connor McDonald:** So, how has drag impacted your life?

**Luna Steelheart:** Honestly, it has been like a hope into the darker parts of my life. Uh, you know I [inaudible] from depression and anxiety. And whenever I struggle, I start to think of the light that drag has inspired me to be and, uh, has been able to show my life a lot more meaning and has been able to allow me to connect with other people in ways that I could never dream of. It allows me to just see that everything does have an art form, and all art is beautiful. I do find a lot of connectivity between myself and my drag persona. And whenever I’m feeling down or scared, Luna is typically my, my torch and my, my strength and my, my armor to continue to be strong and, uh, you know, hold my ground and be who I am.

**Connor McDonald:** So, you would say that drag has changed you personally, as, as well as behaviorally?

**Luna Steelheart:** Absolutely.

**Connor McDonald:** So, how would you describe drag in general?

**Luna Steelheart:** Um, well, I’d like to, kind of, answer as somebody else and say the way that RuPaul says it is. Uh, we’re all born naked, and the rest is drag.

**Connor McDonald:** [Laughs]

**Luna Steelheart:** Anything that you do to modify your persona to be something other than what you are on an everyday basis, is exactly what drag is. It’s to escape... it's a form of escapism. It’s a, a form of personality that you can get to only discover whenever you do change from what you are currently... what, what you currently know as your normal. And, you know, it's, it's art. It's... that’s truly is what it is. I mean, if you dress up for Halloween, I suppose that is a form of drag, and, you know, all forms of drag are to be admired and loved and seen as an artistic feat. And, you know, just keep on the bright side of everything and, you know, it’s, it's exactly an-- anything and everything you could ever hope to... or hope or dream it is.

**Connor McDonald:** That’s great. So, you would believe that the purpose of drag is for an art form?

**Luna Steelheart:** Absolutely. I don’t... if it was anything other than an art form, I don’t think drag would be as big as it is today, at least, or if at all.

**Connor McDonald:** Understandable. So, how would you like to further your drag in the future?

**Luna Steelheart:** Um, for me, this is me shooting for the stars, but, you know, if you shoot across... shoot for the stars and miss, uh, and you land on the moon, then, you know, you, you still accomplished something phenomenal. But, for me, I would love to take this as far as going for a singing career, to be able to travel the country and the world, eventually, and be able to connect my art form and connect my positive vibes and communication, and responsibly help those who are also struggling with their self-identification and their, their inner selves.

And I want people to know that to love yourself is the most important thing, and to continue to be a light for others is how we make this world a better place. And that’s really what I want to do. I want to make the world a better place, and the best way I know how to is to connect to as many people as possible. And the best way that I know how to do that is by elevating my fan base to be a thousand times larger than what it is now. Because through that, I can communicate with a lot more people with a lot less effort. Not that I would give any less effort, but more so that I can connect to a lot of people in a shorter amount of time.

**Connor McDonald:** Makes sense. So, are you very focused right now on trying to raise your following on social media?

**Luna Steelheart:** As of right now, given the many facets and focuses of drag, it is a little difficult to keep up with social, social media pages as I don’t fully understand them as... as a whole. I do try to gain more followers. I do try to, you know, promote myself to the best of my ability. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t, but hey, it’s trial and error thing, and, you know, we just gotta keep, keep it monitored, keep it updated, you know, just keep looking forward to that next show.

**Connor McDonald:** Totally makes sense. Now with the future of your drag, does that also include being on a future season of Drag Race?

**Luna Steelheart:** Oh, absolutely. That is one of my biggest dreams, uh, on how to get, you know, to where my dreams would come to fruition, would be to be on RuPaul’s Drag Race. And you know, even if I don’t make it onto RuPaul’s Drag race, I definitely would like to go on to Dragula or, you know, maybe American Idol, just to be able to... be able to connect with some form of audience, to be able to elevate myself to the... to the limit that I exceed.

**Connor McDonald:** I think that is a great goal to have.

**Luna Steelheart:** For sure.

**Connor McDonald:** So, with Drag Race, how do you feel about Drag Race?

**Luna Steelheart:** As the whole of the show, or how do I feel that I would be on Drag Race as a contestant myself?

**Connor McDonald:** Either/or.

**Luna Steelheart:** Um, I feel like Drag Race as a whole is a very great T.V. show to be able to give fellow performers around the country a bigger name for themselves and be able to have it go mainstream and have a lot of audiences that perceived you multiple different people in multiple different ways. Like, if you’re a [unclear] fan, you’re typically... you know, your humor is gauged towards that facet. And if you’re a fan of Alaska, you know, your humor is gauged a different way. If you’re, you know, more toward Violet, then you like the... a, a lot of the dancing that she does. Or Kameron Michaels, same thing is her dancing and...

So, it goes to show that there’s so many different types of drag and there’s a lot of different ways to connect with it. And, you know, seeing myself on the show, I could see how my brand would be able to be translated for the audiences of not only the United States, but around the world, to have some pe-- or have some people around the world connect with me, and therefore, being able to give RuPaul’s Drag Race more fruits for its labor as well.

**Connor McDonald:** I like that. Do you think that there are any misconceptions that people have about drag?

**Luna Steelheart:** Um, I think the biggest mis-- misconception that a lot of people have about drag performers is that a lot of people think that drag and trans are the same thing, or that if somebody is doing drag, that they are basically saying that they are trans without them actually saying so. And I'd like throw th-- like, throw those assumptions aside and just say that drag is drag. Trans is trans. They are separate, but they are both beautiful in their own ways. And my love of the trans community and my love for the drag community is unequivalated because they are so... just beautiful in their own ways. And I find a lot of connection with both of them.

And you know, for... there are trans drag performers, and there are drag queens who... or drag performers who do identify as trans, and, you know, uh, but those are still separate things. Just drag is an expression whereas trans is a... .is you living to be your true self. And, you know, it, it truly does boil down to something as simple as that, as drag is, like I said, art; and trans is who you are.

**Connor McDonald:** Excellent. I enjoyed that, and I fully love, love that answer.

**Luna Steelheart:** Well, thank you.

**Connor McDonald:** Alright, well, that is all I have for you today. Thank you so much for doing this with me, and thank you for joining me for this project.

**Luna Steelheart:** Of course. I... Of course. And I wish you the best on your fruits of your labor as well.

**Connor McDonald:** Thank you so much. You have a great rest your night.

**Luna Steelheart:** You as well. Bye, bye.

**Connor McDonald:** Bye.