**Fiechtl:** Yeah, all right, well, yes, you go ahead, or we can introduce ourselves first. Okay, I am Brittany Fiechtl, and we are here interviewing Noah.

**Henderson:** And this is CeCe Henderson, also interviewing.

**Steele:** And hi, this is Noah Mazzaratie Steele, hello. First part done

**Fiechtl:** okay. Oh, yes, yes. Should we say, like where we're at and like what's going on?

**Henderson:** Hi. So, we're interviewing Noah Mazzaratie Steele here at Prism tonight is Drag ’em to Hell. All right. Drag 'em to Hell. Alright. We just gonna get this going. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

**Steele:** Okay, well, my stage name is Noah Mazzaratie Steele, but my real name is DeAndre Jenkins. A lot of people in the area around know me use Noah. So, it's just kind of growing me that it's just Noah. I have been performing since 2016. I-uh along that performing, I got introduced to the pageantry world. So, I have captured a title every year that I have performed. And it goes all over state, regional, national. So, it's just been an amazing journey. I started off as a kid in choir in church, so I always had rhythm where music has always been a part of me to do things like that, but to come from not knowing anything about this community and understanding who I was and how comfortable I was, I started to understand where my place was in this LGBTQIA plus community, and knowing that I can get on stage and still be myself. Backstory, I am a theater major, so music and performing arts and music education all tied into this, because I'm always listening to music and to be on stage singing and dancing. Why not? So, there you go. That's me.

**Henderson:** Now, would you say your educational background drew you to drag or drew you to this community?

**Steele:** My education background kind of drew me to… Yes, it played a part of this, because music kind of helped me along the way being a child. And one thing that I very advocate for, that I'm an advocate for, is I'm all about the youth, whether it's queer, trans, bi, what, whatever you feel that you want to be in life, I'm always going to support you. So that has always been my platform, coming into this community in 2016 and I just knew that this was something that I wanted to do. So, part of my education, yes, was to what is it? What it did help me? Sorry, I'm just mixing words. It did help me choose this decision in this platform,

**Henderson:** That's amazing. We definitely always need more advocates for queer youth in the community, especially being people of color, especially being from a city, you know what I mean? We can use more of that. So, what inspired you to start doing what you did, besides your educational background?

**Steele:** Honestly, it was a dare. It was a dare. It was a dare. It was a dare. They dared me to get on stage, and I just grew into this heaviness, thickness, body that I have now. I used to be very, very skinny, and they were like, we gonna put you on something. You gonna get on stage. You gonna do this song. And I'm like, no, I'm not. And they were like, yeah, you are, and you're gonna get paid to do it. Hmm, did you say money? And I went to the show. It's like an amateur show, and I went to it, and I was just like, oh, they're throwing dollars, honey. What's going on? Let me go in the car and see what I got to throw on. I literally had on, I could probably send you guys the picture, blue jean jacket, a glitter hat, glitter all over my body. And I think I did Genuine Pony. I think that was my first song that I ever did, and that kind of just started Noah. And there it is. It was a dare. It just took off from there. So, yeah, the birth of Noah Maserati Steele.

**Henderson:** Love glitter, not for me, but love it for you. I grew up in the queer community. My parents are lesbians, and my uncle was a drag queen. So all of that ain’t nothing new to it girl, ain’t nothing new. But still love it for you. What are some of the biggest challenges you face so far?

**Steele:** The biggest challenge, one of the main biggest challenges, just being comfortable in my own skin, I've been challenged to tap into new genres of music being booked for different shows. You get to expand your horizon. So normally, you're always put in a box being the black token person on a cast, or, you know, you're the, oh, we know what you're going to do. No, you don't, because I always have a trick on my sleeve. So that's one of the main challenges, is just kind of being put in a box. Another challenge that I face is I get in my head a lot, and are they going to like me? Is this going to be something that I can do? Can I continue this? Can I manage this? Can I balance this with my work style, my lifestyle, my family, you know, things like that. Also, another challenge that kind of played with me was, how long did I want to continue this journey and being in this queer community and being a person who people look up to, I became a parent, a father in this community, a mother and a father. So, I have nine kids that a lot of responsibilities come with them growing up. Some of them want to perform. Some of them don't want to perform. They want to figure out, okay, what do I do in life? Can you help me? And they just give their life in my hands. Now I have to live for me. Live for them, help them grow, help them succeed, and also remind myself that I have to do it same as well. So, what I'm teaching to them, I have to preach to myself. So that's one of the main things, is just teach, preach, don't preach, and then teach. That's just it.

**Henderson:** But it sounds like, right, right, exactly. It sounds like you're a pillar in the community, and I'm sure you're nine children,

Steele: You might see them all tonight.

**Henderson:** Oh, well, look at that. Okay, introduce the family.

**Steele:** One of them is in the show tonight.

**Henderson:** Really?

**Steele:** Yeah, so I saw him, my extraordinary child. His name is Christian Giovanni Steele. I, actually, I call him my stalker child because he stalked me. He was doing pictures, and he stalked me for the longest time, before he even asked me to be his father, he was just taking pictures. And I was like, oh, you take pictures. Blah, blah, blah. He's like, I have been following you. And I was like, stalker, but he is an amazing he actually has done a lot of my photograph. A lot of my photos that go all over and they all and I just, I'm amazed. It's amazing because I have a child that does things like this, that I can always help him along with, like, oh yeah, you need a flyer, call my son, or you need pictures, call my son and also get him booked. And he's, he's becoming himself in his own sense, because he doesn't do that cookie cutter male entertainment. He's more on the MX side of things, so that I'm not male, I'm not female, I'm me, and I represented that, and I enjoyed that about him, to watch him do that. So, you guys get to see him tonight. I'm sure, hopefully, he brings out what I asked him to bring out. So, if he does, you guys gonna be in the for a treat tonight.

**Henderson:** That's amazing. All right, final one for me. How would you describe your philosophy or your approach to your work and the impact you hope to make?

**Steele:** Oh, my philosophy in life has always and will forever be, dream it, do it, achieve it, succeed in it.

**Fiechtl:** That was something

**Steele:** And just also believe in yourself when you're doing it. Again, like I said, I have nine kids, so they had already looked up to me. So, that's what I want to leave. When I get done, when I say I'm done, mother/father’s tired. We're not doing this. No more. I can't put on no more makeup. Give me a break, and I know that they can take the step and carry on the legacy and the name and do what needs to be done. So yeah.

**Fiechtl:** Well, that, that’s so neat. Yes, yes. Those are some real good answers. Okay, so I have seen that you were originally from this Tennessee. So being from Memphis, Tennessee, and how it is down there. How would you say, like, how did you were you doing any kind of performing, drag down there? How was the culture down there at different compared to Saint Louis?

**Steele:** No, I did not perform when I was in Memphis, Tennessee. I was not out when I was in Memphis, Tennessee. So, Ha, ha. There you go. Tricky story. I knew about drag, because I was always dancing and choreographing everyone's talent. So that became one thing that I always knew about. So, it was just like kind of a fun part to do. So, when it came down to being here, moving here after I graduated everything, I was just like, okay, let's do it. But there Memphis drag, and St Louis drag, guessed what? It is a big, big, big difference. Memphis is more gaudy, glams, all of Southern style, you know. And then with Saint Louis, it's a mixture of southern, city, originality. Memphis is more, I see this, I need to execute this, and then I can grow from this. With Saint Louis, I believe that everyone has stepped into their own box. They saw someone, and they kind of brought in and did their own thing. So, I can appreciate that from learning Memphis to Saint Louis, so two different, but also in the same.

**Henderson:** Which do you prefer?

**Steele:** You trying to get me going. You trying to get me caught up? She trying to get me caught up. I enjoy all of it.

**Fiechtl:** So just wondered, how, how has that view coming from Memphis? How has that? How has that inspired your art in your performance of drag now? Like, how has that, how has that warped you into the performer you are now? Coming from Memphis, like, what influence has it had?

**Steele:** Just the main influence that it kind of showed me was that, if you see it, then you can definitely do it. Seeing, not seeing a lot of male entertainment, per se, seeing a lot of female entertainment. So, it’s kind of just was like, what do I do? What do I fit in and how do I grasp it and go from there? So, I had to learn how to stand out from others. So, and you guys get to see that tonight, on how I stand out from others when it comes to my performances, and because I dance. High energy, high kicks, flips, things of that nature. We'll see what the body says tonight. I don't know, but I think coming from learning from Memphis to St Louis is really just, I saw it, I could do it. And I think that's what a lot of times in St Louis, is, they see it, they can do it, and it just takes someone to grasp it, to help them get along the way. And as I learned from Memphis, Memphis is there's a lot of big families in Memphis. So, coming from no family to making my own family, that's where I learned from.

**Fiechtl:** That's beautiful. That's beautiful. So, with that said, what? Or I'll just, I'll ask this question, because I really want to know about this question. So, I had seen that after winning titles such as alternate Mr. Gay Georgia, US of A at large, and being crowned king of Metro East pride in 2022. How has your, j ow has your like career ever since being given those titles? How has your career like advanced change since then, like opportunities, your performance, just everything all together, even networks, all the people that you had been given the opportunity to meet since then, anything like that you want to touch on. Sorry, I know that was kind of-

**Steele:**  They had did their research? Whoa, okay. Um, winning all of those titles, each one has, gave me a steppingstone to create a platform for every, for a platform. So, I knew that when I got this title, I knew what was my next step, and you want to go higher so to beat that. So, if I was this person, okay, what’s the next pageant higher than this? What's the next pageant higher than this? What is this gonna do for me? Where's this gonna take me? And you never know again, who's in the audience, who's watching each booking, each place that I've been to, each pageant that I went to judge was in, danced in. I always I put my best foot forward, and I perform like, this is my last turn, and it just captured the attention of so many that I am blessed just to not know anybody, to knowing 1000s of people just walking down the street. And I'm just like, oh my god, your Noah Mazzaratie Steele I'm like, you caught me in my pajamas at the grocery store. Yes, that is it. Can we take a picture with you? Yes, let me... just don't stop my face. Even my mom gets noticed, because my mom is a big part of my my journey. So even when we're out places and they'll be like, you Noah’s mom, and I'm like, what you got noticed? She was like, what do you mean? I'm your mother. I was like, okay, you're fine, you're good. But I think it's just a blessing to know that. So again, I never know where this journey is going to take me, but I'm blessed for every opportunity that I get from capturing each title that I have captured. So yeah, and I currently have the title now of your Mr. Gay Missouri, United States at large, and that is the first, I'm the first one to capture the title here in Missouri. So hopefully to keep it here, but I'm the first person to capture it. So, we'll see what happens. Nationals is in November, so we're gonna see it's in Virginia, Harrisburg. If anyone wants to make a donation, help me out? Because, well, I’m dancing in a friend of mine’s talent. So, I'm going to go to Springfield to help her capture her title. So, you know, but I wish I would have so I would have loved to have a point, but hopefully it's another opportunity, because I do believe I have performed at SIUE once or twice.

**Henderson:** Well, hopefully next time you do, I’m still here.

**Fiechtl:** Yeah, yeah, me too!

**Steele:** When y'all know the show coming up and get Noah, please. I’ll be there.

**Fiechtl:** Okay, okay, well, I guess you kind of answered my last question. Because, well, I was first going to ask, I know you guys have an event here tomorrow, and you're celebrating a friend's birthday. So, I know you're celebrating something else. Is it? You're celebrating an organization I saw or?

**Steele:** That's a good question. Tomorrow is not my show. So, I was just booked on the show. But that is my sister, Sarah Shay. Sarah Shay show. She's also a film entertainer as well, and she is the national queen of gay United States. So that's her show. It's called all tea, all Shay. I wish she was here right now to talk about it, because I'm sure there's an organization that we are supporting. We always do something. Right now, I do have someone who comes in on Monday nights, and we have been trying to get a lot of our queer community to vote. We want to make sure that you’re registered vote. We want to make sure that you are, have the opportunity to vote whoever you vote for, just make the right decision on whoever you vote for. Let me just make sure I keep saying that again or whoever you vote for, just make the right decision if you want to see myself or any of these other communities or any or any of these other drag shows that you want to go to vote for the right person, whoever she may be.

Fiechtl: Perio with that. Need to be said. Well, what I guess ending with that, what are your future plans, future goals? Where do you see, or you don't you don't have to go too into detail.

**Steele:** I honestly don't know what the future may hold as in titles or performing or anything. My main goal and my life goal is to live every day like it's your last one. And I know a lot of times like you don't know what your three-year goal is, your five-year goal is, heck no, as long as I get up the next day, there's a whole new chapter that I can start. If I touch someone's soul, touch their heart, touch their mind just to wake up and think about me, or not just thank God for that moment, and it just goes from there. So, I don't know exactly where the journey may take Noah, but be on the lookout, because something new is always coming up

**Fiechtl:** Yes! Yes! Well, I guess, yes, thank you.

**Steele:** Thank you, guys, so much. Thank you, guys, so much. It was, it was great time. And hopefully you guys stick around to where you guys can see the, oh, there is the next chapter for Noah. So, we can, so we can get an audience, I can announce it. Um, the next chapter for Noah is, Noah will be taking a leave of absence while the alter ego is coming back. And when I say Alter Ego is, I am, I'm a part time drag queen as well. Y'all want to interview Noah. Y'all didn't say nobody else. So, her name is Shante Lee Valentino, and she will be making her debut in April, running for St Louis, Queen of pride.

**Fiechtl:** Okay, everyone hear that? Yeah,

Steele: It’s a pageant, so you guys are more than welcome to come out and watch and cheer me on. I am a former STL Pride 2017 so this is I would be the first Mr. to ever cross over. You just got the exclusive interview.

**Fiechtl:** All right, well, I guess, honestly.

**End of Interview**