Minnesota is synonymous with great music.

The state produced blues greats such as greats "Lazy" Bill Lucas and "Big" Walter Smith. Of course, the state was home to folk-rock legend Bob Dylan; and thanks to Brother Ali (and others) Minnesota is becoming known for its hip-hop scene. Just in one family, the area produced Ann Nesby, mother to Jamecia Bennett and grandmother to Paris Bennett. No one can dispute the area's phenomenal R & B contributions to society with artist Jimmy Jam, Terry Lewis, Morris Day – the band that birthed them, The Time and the state's prize, Prince.

Now the state has claim to a new star, Catrina "Trina Gurl" Tresvant. Trina Gurl – which is Tresvant's stage name – is as real as they come. This highly talented vocalist and actress with an alto tone voice reminiscent of Billie Holiday and Etta James, seems to hold the listeners' hands and takes them into her music with the specific intent to entertain. Most of Trina Gurl's music is originally composed by her. Her single, "I'm So Glad I Found You," is one that KMOJ, KFAI or other independent stations of Minnesota are missing out on.

"The lyrics come from my experiences in life, the good and the bad, and I feel good about sharing them with the crowd through song," said Trina Gurl.

I recently saw her performance on Halloween night at the Red Sea (320 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis) and was mesmerized by every song she sang. Her band was professional, in sync and extremely soulful. They knew the rhythm of this star's focus and how passionately she

enjoys performing. We all did. Her rendition of Tina Turner's "I Smell Trouble" was so good that we all had to blink to make sure it was still Trina Gurl on stage. In between sets (there were three), this veteran vocalist generously allowed other local talents to showcase their talents. Her connection to the audience was nice and easy, smooth and appetizing. Trina Gurl truly gives a show that music lovers won't want to miss.

Fans can catch the versatile artist Trina Gurl performing as "Felicia" in the long-running play, "I'm A Deadbeat Who?" (Directed and Produced by AT Productions). The show takes place at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 20, at Normandale College.

Check out Trina Gurl's latest video "My Past" on YouTube.