

## Mp3 Allison Crowe - Secrets



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original, melodic, singer-songwriter Allison Crowe has a voice and piano style that is entirely her own beautiful, honest and authentic 11 MP3 Songs ROCK: Acoustic, POP: Piano Details: "Why music?" "Why breathing?" That's Allison Crowe's credo. Here is her story: "Allison Crowe has a voice to fall in love with," observes Record of the Day (UK). "She is from Vancouver Island in Canada, descended from Irish and Manx stock. She's exactly the sort of artist who can make serious headway on her own label and that's just what she's doing." The love affair began with Allison Crowe's first public performance belting out a big hit of the Jazz Age, Ja-da (Ja-da Jing Jing Jing!) at age six. Nina Simone (a genre-buster of another generation) and Chet Baker albums were spinning at home. Carrying this music into her school band and music theatre studies, she found a coach to help harness her powerful vocal instrument and mentors to encourage her playing on piano, flute, bass and drums. Allison's parents' music collection was soon joined by her own discoveries albums from Ani DiFranco, Pearl Jam, Tori Amos and Counting Crows making for an eclecticism evident today in her music. "I grew up surrounded by music. There was a lot of jazz, classical and rock, in both my immediate and my extended families," she says. "Everyone I was surrounded by inspired me in different ways. They inspired me to play better, work harder, enjoy what music and being a musician can be, while at the same time being realistic about all that it can bring. Good and bad. Also, not to let it go to your head at any time, under any circumstances. And that can mean either getting a huge inflated ego, or, being overly hard on yourself." Allison Crowe's birthplace, Nanaimo, B.C., (known as the "Harbour City"), is found on Vancouver Island, in the naturally beautiful ocean and forest setting of Canada's Pacific Northwest. An historic coal-mining town, music (starting with colliery bands) was planted in the region early on - a cultural counterpoint to the tough working conditions and remoteness from "mainland" civilization. In tune with this unique duality, Allison is earthy and ethereal.

When not on tour, she practices piano daily in her living room, situated on ground not far above a honeycomb of dormant mine shafts, and only minutes from the former site of the Pygmy Ballroom where Louis Armstrong and other greats of the Big Band era made a pilgrimage. Darkly serious and blithely comic, by age 15, choosing voice and piano as her instruments, Crowe was playing to ever-widening crowds in coffee-houses and bars up and down her island. "I love singing for people," she says. "It's a way to connect and share with others, which is very important for emotional survival. Communication is crucial. Just being able to do what I do, to write and sing and perform, makes me feel not only alive, but incredibly lucky. Knowing at any moment everything could change, I don't take one second for granted."

Now 24, the girl once deemed the funniest in her high school is known best for the intensity of her musical expression. Through hundreds of public performances in coffeehouses, clubs, cabarets, soft-seat theatres, concert halls, on radio and television, from local to national stages and beyond, Allison Crowe is earning her reputation as an one-of-a-kind talent. Risk-taking and fearless. Emotional but not overly sentimental. Uncompromising and highly entertaining. She's distinguished by an approach to art that is, both, iconoclastic and populist remarkably bridging the "high-low fork in the road" of pop culture. Allison Crowe has shared a stage with popular jazzier, and fellow Nanaimo-ite, Diana Krall and had her version of a Beatles song placed on a tribute album alongside tracks by punk/DIY legends Sylvain Sylvain (of the New York Dolls) and the late Dee Dee Ramone. A pair of one-hour concert television specials, "Inside Pandora's Box: Allison Crowe" and "Allison Crowe: Tidings", have been broadcast across Canada.

"Beautifully moody or riotously rocking, Allison Crowe creates piano-based music of transcendent quality," is how she was billed as a featured guest artist on the website of recording artist Jewel. "This is no casual background music... be prepared to be amazed," said a recent review. "Thrilling, stunning, spine-tingling, and breath-taking are all words used by critics who've found this "force of nature", this "fiery-haired bundle of contradictions", impossible to pigeonhole. As one journalist has said of Crowe: "Make your own comparisons, then forget them." "Soulful. Alive. Joyous. Grievous. Real, true, music is what I want to make," she says. To that end, in late 2003 Allison Crowe launched her own label, Rubenesque Records Ltd., with the release of "Lisa's Song + 6 Songs" a collection of songs recorded live off-the-floor over the preceding couple of years. This initial EP garnered positive press and continues to reward listeners. "Secrets", the singer-songwriter's debut full-length album, (recorded by herself, at home), was released to wide-spread acclaim in Summer 2004. Collected Sounds named Secrets one of

the "Top CDs of 2004", saying: "Allison Crowe is an amazing talent and the music world would be doing itself a huge favor if it paid her the attention she deserves. Get her CDs now, and you can say you knew her 'when'." "Tidings", a collection of songs for the season of reflection, joy and peace was Rubenesque's next, Winter, release. This album was one of the best-reviewed holiday albums of 2004, and received raves in print coast-to-coast from critics who labeled Tidings "sublime", "marvelously thoughtful", "truly transcendent", "a triumph", and "the Yuletide find of the year." Summing up the collective response was this reviewer's declaration: "Following so closely after Secrets, released on Crowe's own label a few months ago, Tidings confirms the arrival of a recording artist who has what it takes to climb to the highest echelons of Canadian, if not international, pop music." Secrets, Tidings and Allison Crowe's new, double album, "Live at Wood Hall", are available through Festival Distribution (Canada's home of jazz, blues, roots, folk, world music "and much much more"), her own website, and also through an international range of online retailers. rock - gospel, jazz - grunge, classical - blues, folk - soul; a voice that unites genres and generations

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