Alicia Keys - Songs In A Minor (2001)

CD1: *01. Piano & I 02. Girlfriend 03. How Come You Don't Call Me 04. Fallin' 05. Troubles 06. Rock Wit U 07. A Woman's Worth 08. Jane Doe 09. Goodbye 10. The Life 11. Mr. Man (duet with Jimmy Cozier) 12. Never Felt This Way (interlude) 13. Butterflyz 14. Why Do I Feel So Sad 15. Caged Bird 16. Lovin U* CD2: *01. A Woman's Worth (Remix) featuring Nas 02. Juiciest (Mixtape Version) 03. If I Were Your Woman (Funky Blues Demo) 04. Fallin' (Ali Soundtrack Version) 05. Typewriter (From the songs in A minor vault) 06. Butterflyz (The Drumline Mix)*

She may be beautiful, but Alicia Keys is a musician first and foremost. She plants herself firmly behind the piano keys on her debut, unlike many of the booty-waggin' junior divas who are crowding the R&B videoscape these days. Though many of the tracks on Songs in A Minor are embellished with adolescent angst, this 20-year-old's substantial, gorgeously soul-drenched alto putties the cracks between notes with astonishing ease. "Fallin'," the album's first single, showcases Keys at her best. She wails plaintively and passionately over rolling blues chords, in the tradition of the greats that this young talent clearly wants to align herself with--Stevie Wonder, Donny Hathaway, and Aretha Franklin. She swoops and soars over the spicy, flamenco-fueled melody that opens "Mr. Mann," one of the many winning tracks gathered here. And she digs deep into a remake of the beloved Prince B-side, "How Come U Don't Call Me Anymore?" packing more heat into her melismatic wails than most singers twice her age.
---Sylvia W. Chan, Editorial Reviews

Alicia Keys' debut album, Songs in A Minor, made a significant impact upon its release in the summer of 2001, catapulting the young singer/songwriter to the front of the neo-soul pack. Critics and audiences were captivated by a 19-year-old singer whose taste and influences ran

back further than her years, encompassing everything from Prince to smooth '70s soul, even a little Billie Holiday. In retrospect, it was the idea of Alicia Keys that was as attractive as the record, since soul fans were hungering for a singer/songwriter who seemed part of the tradition without being as spacy as Macy Gray or as hippie mystic as Erykah Badu while being more reliable than Lauryn Hill. Keys was all that, and she had style to spare -- elegant, sexy style accentuated by how she never oversang, giving the music a richer feel. It was rich enough to compensate for some thinness in the writing -- though it was a big hit, "Fallin'" doesn't have much body to it -- which is a testament to Keys' skills as a musician. And, the fact is, even though there are some slips in the writing, there aren't many, and the whole thing remains a startling assured, successful debut that deserved its immediate acclaim and is already aging nicely. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, Rovi

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