

What some Critics are saying about JOYANN PARKER's "HARD TO LOVE":

"Blasting forth defiantly ('You say you're gonna change/ But I ain't staying to find out') with the throbbing 'Memphis,' the Minnesota blueswoman throws down a gauntlet and sets a high bar of expectations that the rest of this 13-track album generally meets. It showcases her as a singing, songwriting (with guitarist Mark Lamoine), guitar-playing, self-producing, self-aware powerhouse, but the driving force is unquestionably her voice — a formidable instrument she wields with soul and taste. RIYL Shemekia Copeland and Janiva Magness." (Bliss/Pasadena Weekly)

"There's some serious singing and musicianship afoot here...She's got the pipes and comes across honestly and passionately...on firmly planted ground singing the smoldering, slow-burning Stax-like ballads." (Jim Hynes/Elmore Magazine)

"this woman has found the inner meaning of the word SOUL and she has made it her purpose to explore it thoroughly." (Bob Gottlieb/No Depression)

"the next great Twin Cities blues singer...Joyann Parker is the best Twin Cities female singer you've never heard. Imagine a sober Janis Joplin. And that's a good thing. Imagine a taller Shemekia Copeland without the my-dad-was-a-blues-star pedigree. And that's a really good thing. There's pain in Parker's heart — and in just about every song she writes and sings. And, onstage, the grimace on her face, the clenched fists and the ache in her roar let listeners know that she knows hurt...Whatever she plays, Parker owns it." (Jon Bream/Minneapolis Star-Tribune)

"Parker is a great songwriter and vocalist with a crackerjack band. This album is one of the year's best." (Richard Ludmerer/Making A Scene)

"The immense, propulsive bass notes that open the album are the first hint that we are in for a treat with *Hard To Love*, the Minneapolis singer's second album. Promising that, 'By the time I get to Memphis, you'll be gone,' Parker (producer, guitar, piano, and trumpet) wastes no time establishing her power as a vocalist and bandleader. Her blend of blues and roots includes plenty of Memphis-Muscle Shoals spirited soul, and with just a hint of country in her voice...Like the best soul-enriched blues, *Hard To Love* contains tales of trouble, misplaced devotion, and broken vows and shattered hearts. Some songs simmer with desire ('Jigsaw Heart' and '[Home](#)') while other songs shade their passions behind a danceable beat that few this side the late Sharon Jones can manage ('[Dizzy](#)' for example). Like the best of songwriters, Parker takes her experiences and threads them through those of others, creating relatable songs containing universal truths. And, you can dance to it! (Donald Teplyske/Fervor Coulee)

"Joyann Parker's voice is sensuously soulful and it raises the temperature on a wide variety of blues styles here...The title track, 'Hard To Love,' is an emotion-packed torch song. It could have been a standard from the Great American Songbook...her sound is hot, hot, hot!" (Paul Freeman/Pop Culture Classics)

"we are dealing with a future big star here...the rawness of a female singer like Elkie Brooks and the soul of female vocalists like Joss Stone and Dusty Springfield...very soulful...impressive". (Peter Marinus/Blues Magazine NL)

"By opening full-throated, scorched and scorned, 'Memphis' immediately disintegrates any illusion of demureness that *Hard To Love*'s lace and lipstick cover might mistakenly relay. Joyann Parker...is the fiery femme fatale...And besides tripling up on guitar and trumpet, the Minneapolis-based pianist writes darn-good tortured love songs ." (Dennis Rozanski/Baltimore BluesRag)

"a powerful, sassy, soulful singer who also plays guitar, piano and trumpet and wrote all 13 of the songs on *Hard To Love*...Ms. Parker really shines...Her voice just plain soars" (Bill Mitchell/BluesBytes)

"Joyann Parker, got the looks, got an incredible voice and even got the songs! She's got the musicians and a fantastic song writing partner in Mark Lamoine. It's all perfect." (Peter Jacobs/Keys and Chords)

"On this, her second release, she shows a broad appreciation for her new-found passion and co-wrote all 13 tracks with guitarist **Mark Lamoine**. With a voice that easily negotiates everything from a low-down growl to a pristine soprano, sometimes in the course of a single verse, she works her way through funky accusations of infidelity, 'Who What When Where Why', rocking kiss offs to a man who will fade from memory within the course of a single trip, 'Memphis', loose New Orleans style blues that can't help but turn up the heat, 'Ray', as well as sultry ballads about a relationship that can't work either because it was unobtainable in the first place, 'Jigsaw Heart,', or because she's just plain difficult, 'Evil Hearted'...The title track sounds like a long-lost songbook classic ...A terrific release that reveals that while **Joyann Parker** is new to the blues, she has already earned a master's degree.." (Mark R. Smith/Music Revue)

"some of the smokiest, smokingest green eyed soul you are going to encounter...Killer stuff throughout." (Chris Spector/Midwest Record)

"thirteen cuts written by Joyann and guitarist Mark Lemoine. Fans, they don't write just any blues songs—this duo creates soulful, passionate trips into the listener's heart, just the way they wrote 'em back in the days of Sam, Dave, Aretha, Dan, and Spooner...Joyann Parker writes stories in song to which we can all relate. For sure, nothing on this set will ever be 'Hard To Love!'" (Don & Sheryl Crow/Nashville Blues Society)

"Joyann Parker has the look of a blues singer who would thrive in a smoky lounge late at night. Looks can be deceiving as her voice has a soulful quality that fuses the two styles together. She brings that duality to her new album titled *Hard To Love*...more emotional than flashy...Songs such as 'Bluer That You,' 'Evil Hearted,' 'What Happened To Me,' and "'Take My Heart And Run' tell personal stories that resonate with the world around her." (David Bowling/Cashbox)

"the 13 tracks on 'Hard To Love' have a lived-in feel that suggests a lifetime soaking in timeworn soul and blues traditions" (Pete Chianca/Gatehouse Newspapers)

"powerful voice, which can hit those sad, bluesy lows and still croon skyward." (Isthmus)

"If you want music with a whole lot of soul and passion, music that can move your heart one moment, then move your feet the next, check out the new release from Joyann Parker, *Hard To Love*... The songwriting is strong, with lots of good, memorable lines." (Michael Doherty/Michael's Music Log)