



• **COST-NO-OBJECT**

**LOUDSPEAKER OF THE YEAR**

**Focal Stella Utopia EM**

\$90,000

This next-to-top-of-the-line loudspeaker from Focal isn't the last word in any specific sonic criterion, but it serves up a musically engaging gestalt that defies sonic dissection. This is one beautifully balanced loudspeaker, from its deep and full bass, through its open and detailed midrange, to its smooth yet detailed treble. Employing a 13" electro-magnetically driven woofer, two 6.5" midrange drivers, and an inverted beryllium tweeter—all of Focal's design and manufacture—the Stella Utopia is a big speaker and it sounds like it, with an extended bottom end, tremendous authority, and seemingly unlimited dynamics. Despite its size, the Stella is just as musically compelling with small-scale music as it is with orchestral spectacles. Moreover, this loudspeaker disappears in every sense of the word; it throws a wide, deep, and precisely focused soundstage, but more importantly, seems to make the entire playback chain vanish when the music starts. This is not a loudspeaker that calls attention to itself with sonic fireworks. Rather, it makes the music the star of the show. The Stella unfailingly fosters an immediate and deep immersion in the musical expression that is enormously compelling. Extensive rear-panel adjustments, along with a woofer-level control on the outboard electromagnetic drive module, allow you to precisely dial-in the Stella's tonal balance to your room and electronics. What's more, with a sensitivity of 94dB, the Stella can be driven by amplifiers of modest power. The Focal Stella Utopia EM is a world-class loudspeaker in every way, and a deserving honoree of *The Absolute Sound's* Cost-no-Object Loudspeaker of the Year Award. *RH (219)*

