Omnia offers some of everything

By Richard Dyer

A

n impressive new record label named Musica Omnia has been launched with a diverse repertoire of Baroque, classical, and Romantic music performed by distinguished musicians, several of them with Boston connections. The company is the creation of Boston harpsichordist and instrument builder Peter Watchorn, who appears on several of the releases.

But the company is anything but a vanity operation. The discs are handsomely presented with distinctive program notes, unusual photographs, and art reproductions; each recording comes with an extra CD of musical and cultural analysis called "Beyond the Notes."

Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, and Mendelssohn were unavailable to participate personally, but an album of music by John Harbison, "The Rewaking," has the historic advantage of Harbison's own observations about his music on the "Beyond the Notes" CD. The program features the Lydian String Quartet in performances of Harbison's Third Quartet, "Fantasia on a Ground," "The Rewaking" (with soprano Dominique Labelle singing settings of poems by William Carlos Williams), and "Thanks Victor" — an encore piece written for the Lydians to honor their patron, film composer and songwriter Victor Young, whose estate supports their work at Brandeis University.

Watchorn has recorded the music of Tudor and Jacobean England and Bach's sonatas for violin and harpsichord with Emlyn Ngai. Pianist Sally Pinkas has recorded the nocturnes of Faure, and other artists working for the label are the Atlantis Trio, baritone Max von Egmond, fortepianists Kenneth Slowik and Penelope Crawford, violinist and conductor Jaap Schoedel, and the Adaskin String Trio.

The records are now in the stores. For further information visit the Web site www.musicaomnia.com.