Bookazine Goes Pop: Wholesaler Focuses on Comics and More

After watching its graphic novel business grow steadily for years even without any special attention, Bookazine, a Bayonne, N.J., book wholesaler in business since 1929, is now taking a more hands-on approach. The company has hired a comics and pop culture specialist and launched Popazine, a new campaign to market graphic novels and a wide range of pop-culture titles to general trade bookstores and to target the comics shop market—a new business sector for the general books wholesaler.

Kathleen Willoughby, Bookazine v-p, marketing and online development, says, "We were selling graphic novels for years without much marketing effort." But between 2003 and 2005, Willoughby says, Bookazine's business with each of its top three graphic novel suppliers grew more than 60%. And, she says, graphic novel sales as a part of Bookazine's overall business grew from about 1% in 2003 to nearly 4% last year. "Sales in 2002 were pretty modest," says Willoughby, "but beginning in 2003, we experienced a noticeable and continuing increase."

Late last year, Bookazine (www.bookazine.com) hired John Davis, a longtime comics marketing specialist and former director of book sales at manga publisher Central Park Media, to direct the program. Davis organized Popazine, a marketing program that includes a Popaganza, a free e-mail newsletter with info on new titles and products—from Emily Strange to the latest graphic novels of Chris Ware to manga, anime and super-hero comics and books on videogames, movies, science fiction and fantasy. Popazine also offers a variety of pop culture catalogs, a graphic novel bestseller list and merchandising assistance, and there's more stuff to come.

Bandai Launches U.S. Manga Division

Bandai's long brewing manga line is finally announced, starting with Eureka SeveN, based on an anime and videogame series.

D&Q Unveils U.K. Rights Deals for Adrian Tomine, Seth

D&Q has signed an exclusive agreement with Samantha Haywood of the Transatlantic Literary Agency to represent its graphic novel list to publishers outside of North America.

New Kramers Ergot Due This Summer

The groundbreaking anthology Kramers Ergot returns this summer with its sixth issue, and teams with Buenaventura Press and Gingko Books.
Jack Moriarty makes his return to comics in the pages of Kramer's Ergot #6, due out this summer.

Howard to Star in Spidey 3; Mandate Takes Ghouly Boys

Bryce Dallas Howard, daughter of Oscar-winning director Ron Howard and star of The Village, has been cast as Gwen Stacy in Spider-Man 3, which began filming last week.

"Bringing Bryce Howard aboard shows our continuous commitment to cast excellent and interesting actors and actresses in the Spider-Man movies," says Marvel Studios chief Avi Arad, who is producing the picture with Laura Ziskin. Sam Raimi is back to direct the film from a script by Spider-Man 2 screenwriter Alvin Sargent that is based on a story by Raimi and his brother, Ivan.

Dragon Head Vol. 1


Imagine waking up in a pitch-black train wreck filled with broken glass and bodies. No one answers when you call for help—and as you begin to orient yourself, you realize that this might be because everyone around you is dead. Mochizuki opens this story with the wide, terror-struck eyes of schoolboy Aoki Teru as he wakes up into just such a nightmare, and from there, the suspense never lets up. Not that this is a particularly fast-paced book—instead of frenzied action, we get fine gradations of panic and exhaustion. Each new piece of information deepens a growing sense of dread: not only has the train crashed, it's also been sealed in by falling rocks. Aoki is not entirely alone, but of the two other companions he finds, one is unconscious and the other is going crazy. And then there's the strange, stifling heat. Mochizuki's narrative pacing is so deft, and his drawings so effective at communicating nuances of emotion that the story unfolds for us with the same urgency and immediacy as it does for Aoki and his companions. The result is an emotionally and psychologically compelling drama that promises to be an unforgettable journey into darkness with future volumes. (Feb.)

Colleen Doran Opens The Book of Lost Souls

Colleen Doran has worked as a cartoonist, illustrator and film conceptual artist, but it is comics she calls home. She has done work in all areas of the medium while continuing her creator-owned series, A Distant Soil, which was created while she was still in her teens. In recent years she has expanded further with the space exploration graphic novel Orbiter with writer Warren Ellis, and now with a new series with the creator of the television series Babylon 5, J. Michael Straczynski. The monthly ongoing series The Book of Lost Souls premiered in October 2005, and the first book collection is due in May 2006.
The Buzz on Nextwave; Catwoman's Back

With this issue we're launching This Week on G4TV, a sneak preview of the comics that Blair Butler—G4TV's resident comics guru—reviews each week. Blair gives her inimitable take on what she's been reading every Thursday on Fresh Ink, the comics segment on Attack of the Show, G4TV's gaming and pop culture variety show.

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**PW Comics Week**

Editors: Calvin Reid and Heidi MacDonald
Contributing Editor: Douglas Wolk
pwcomicsweek@reedbusiness.com
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