

manga

MANIA!

COOL JAPANESE COMIC
AND ANIMATION NEWS
YOU NEED TO KNOW...

IMAGE LOOKS EAST

Declares April 'Manga Month' with four new comic launches

April ain't just for practical jokes any more. Image Comics declares the month as "Manga Month" and launches four new manga-influenced books to celebrate.

According to Image's Director of Marketing Eric Stephenson, it just made sense to devote a whole month to manga, especially after the publisher received multiple pitches from new creators for manga-influenced mini-series. Given that manga and anime have become hot commodities in recent years, it's no surprise that Image wanted a piece of the action.

"Manga doesn't rely on 30 or 40 years of history," explained Stephenson. "There's a freshness to it that probably comes from the fact that the creators producing manga aren't content to simply redo comics they enjoyed during their youth. And I think kids typically want something they can call their own, which I don't think mainstream American comics have been giving them for some time now."

Until now! Check out *Wizard's* guide to these four hot new series.

THE AGENTS (Six-issue mini-series by Ben Dunn and Kevin Gunstone)


Thirty years after Washington and Moscow were obliterated in nuclear strikes, the world's safety lies in the hands of the men and women of the Agency, a planet-wide group of protectors operating out of Britain. The Agency uses espionage and cloak-and-dagger tactics to enforce world peace. But in a world of uncertainty, there are those who will stop at nothing to take the Agency out of the game—permanently. (April 30)

HEIRS OF ETERNITY (Four-issue miniseries by Jose Torres, Jae Tsai and Jim Royal)

Love and hate combine to form a double-edged sword that can cut both ways. Five different beings take up this

"sword," and each discovers that sometimes the greatest enemy is the one within. As their lives gradually spiral out of control, the five collide amidst a tempest of the darkest emotions of the heart. As war between Heaven and Hell rages, they will learn that what lies within can be just as powerful and deadly as anything of the divine or the damned. (April 30)

ROTOGIN: JUNKBOTZ (Eight-issue miniseries by Jay Lee and J. Korim)



In a cyberpunk future, gear head Kaylin Dakota calls the mega city of Nalus Toyocom home. But the "city of rings" is also home to a more sinister group of citizens—the ever-growing criminal organization U.B.B. The U.B.B. runs dangerous, illegal battle robot tournaments. When Kaylin discovers her friend has fallen into a crime lord's debt, Kaylin builds her battle bot and enters the U.B.B. Fighter's Circuit to save him. It will take all of Kaylin's considerable talent—and a good deal of luck—if either of them is to survive. (April 23)

SOUL OF THE SAMURAI (Four-issue bimonthly miniseries by Will Dixon)

A young samurai undertakes a spiritual quest to gain the ultimate enlightenment, forsaking his rank and his honor to attain his goal. His sojourn is a difficult one, for he must face four inner demons, each representing a different part of his soul. But when even victory brings pain and torment, the samurai will learn that sometimes what one seeks is not worth the cost. (April 30) ■ CAITLIN MORIARITY

I AM SAM(URAI) This touching series stars a mentally challenged samurai learning the ropes of real life. Or not.