



MORRISSEY

WEMBLEY ARENA

CLAD IN Moz bracelets and T-shirts bearing the image of the late Edith Sitwell, the faithful flood into Wembley Arena. Some of them will miss half the show as Morrissey has put the starting time forward half an hour, but most are eagerly clutching their NHS specs and gladioli (still?) and heading for the front. This is stadium Moz time after all and tonight we have come to the biggest bedsit in London to check out the weirdest rockabilly band in the world.

The opera overture ends and what has to be one of the worst versions of 'Interesting Drug' ever performed falls out of the speakers. Every so often a backing rockabilly person can be heard shouting the chorus but all else is anarchy. Hurriedly burying that one under the carpet, Moz and his cats rumble into 'Last Of The Famous International Playboys'. Despite lacking the single's awesome Moog wibble, the song benefits from Morrissey's somersaults, floor-tumbling and a trick he has of bouncing the mike on the floor and, or, breaking it. New mike in hand, he continues, this time confining himself to cracking the mike chord like a ring-master. A swift slaughter of The New York Dolls' 'Trash' ensues, enthusiastic and completely bizarre.

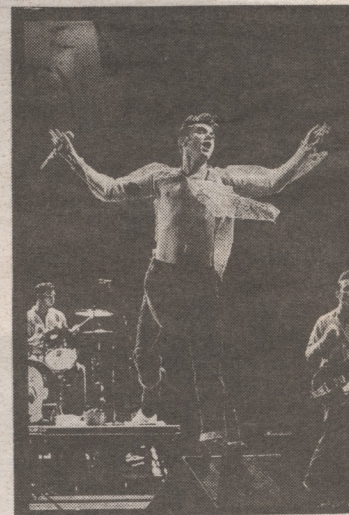
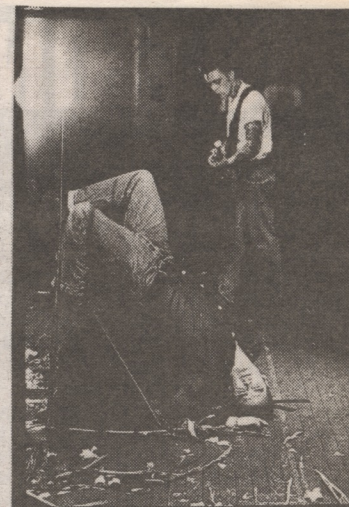
Sanity is absent as a slap bass appears and Morrissey throws 'Sing Your Life' into a bubbling cauldron of rewritten incoherence. Tonight the lovely singing voice belongs to the rockabilly backing vocalist and his incredible yodelling "sing your lie-eeh".

"This song was written . . . by William Shakespeare," drawls El Moz and the band duly tiptoe into the rockabilly shuffle that is, of course, 'King Leer'. Very tastefully done.

'Asian Rut' with its funeral pace turns out to be fairly magnificent. Morrissey holds up one end of the bass. Muted feedback is played. The band act the goat. They continue to do this during 'Pregnant For



Moz: The arched-back deacon of Wembley



FROM HERE TO MATERNITY

The Last Time'—a tune whose rockabilly stylings goad them into a flat-topped frenzy—and become alarmingly daft during 'Mute Witness', where they run about all over the stage and strike highly naff Clash poses. The slap bass is played in the manner of Bill Haley And His Comets ie between the legs whilst lying on one's back. Moz rears "Shhcccc . . . POINTED at the FRISBEE!" and points dramatically. This is stagecraft.

In later years, experts will mark the performance of 'Mute Witness' as the moment that Morrissey found artistic and personal freedom through the release of normal inhibitions. Tonight, however, we were content to watch in overwhelmed appreciation as he lay on his back facing the drums, stuck both his legs in the air, and completed the song in the position of an acrobat whose back has gone mid-

tumble. This is so impressive that Mozzer's other stage actions—tearing his clothes up, bearing a breast to the audience, and good old waving his arms about—seem mundane and workaday. Perhaps on later tours Morrissey will imitate '70s cult axeman Nils Lofgren and perform while leaping up and down on a trampoline.

We can only anticipate. Meanwhile the band have temporarily abandoned rockabilly for a sympathetic reading of 'Everyday Is Like Sunday'. Their trebly touch brings new life of 'November Spawned A Monster'; it acquires a curiously U2-like ambient jangle and is frankly the better for it. Morrissey wisely avoids an impression of Mary Margaret O'Hara's peculiar gurgling noises and announces 'That's Entertainment' as being a Noel

Coward song. The band take it at three speeds, each one progressively faster.

Time marches on, 'Our Frank' is revealed to have a tinge of—yes!—rockabilly about it and fairly thunders along. "Give us a cigarette" vocalises Sir Moz and is nearly blinded by a flying Silk Cut. He indicates his gratitude by showing us his far from ample bosom. We are duly appreciative. Moz re-attires himself in what by now are mere rags and 'Suedehead' is chugged into.

An innocent Moz fan in the front row is staggered as Morrissey lies face down on the stage a foot in front of him and, fixing him with a steely but ironic gaze, sings, "Why do you come here?" right at him and then skips off. The band handle the tune a little roughly and I am disappointed to learn that Morrissey does not sing "It was



a bootleg, a bootleg" as I had always believed, but "It was a privilege, a privilege". Oh well.

And now it is encore time. David Bowie does not turn up but some stagedivers do. One attempts to climb Morrissey's shoulders and others never quite make it to the stage. Morrissey reaches out a hand to them; after all, stage-invading at Wembley Arena is possibly slightly harder than getting a gig there. "Thank you," says Morrissey before bashing out 'Yes I Am Blind', "You're very kind".

'Disappointed' follows with B-side-like inevitability and Morrissey sings the bit about it being the last song he will ever sing. He is, of course once more engaged in the manufacture of pork pies.

Moz will return and return and return for showbiz is in his blood. And we punters had major fun too.

David Quantick