

Ozzy says farewell in style

**Black Sabbath
NEC**

THE Black Sabbath story began in Birmingham - and tonight it's ending in Birmingham.

More than 30 years after they got together in the industrial back streets of the city, Ozzy Osbourne, Tony Iommi, Geezer Butler and Bill Ward are calling it a day in order to pursue solo projects.

Black Sabbath is one of the biggest rock bands in the world but it is Birmingham's NEC that is the venue for their last two shows together, with the final one tonight.

Last night's concert, dubbed The Last Supper, almost ended in chaos as fans ripped off hundreds of seat covers and flung them around the arena during the final songs *Children of the Grave* and *Paranoid*.

The whole show featured three support bands and had started two and half hours before Black Sabbath took to the stage at 9pm. A good number of the near-capacity audience had obviously spent the time drinking, which may partly explain the vandalism.

Sabbath's 95-minute set started explosively with air raid warnings being sounded before they launched into *War Pigs* and *N.I.B.*

Ozzy worked the crowd into a frenzy

with his constant appeals for football-style chants between songs.

He threw buckets of water over stewards, cameramen and the front rows of the audience, and at one point turned his back on the crowd and mooned at them.

The band ran through all the old

favourites, including *Sweet Leaf*, *Iron Man* and *Black Sabbath*.

Constant throughout were Bill Ward's pounding drums, Geezer Butler's grumbling bass and Tony Iommi's doom-laden lead guitar riffs.

Ozzy said: "It's been 31 years since we started and if I could do it all over again I'd jump at the chance."

It remains to be seen if, after tonight, Ozzy's wish comes true.

■ SWAN SONG: Ozzy Osbourne on stage at the NEC last night

Picture: EDWARD MOSS

By ANDY COLEMAN

