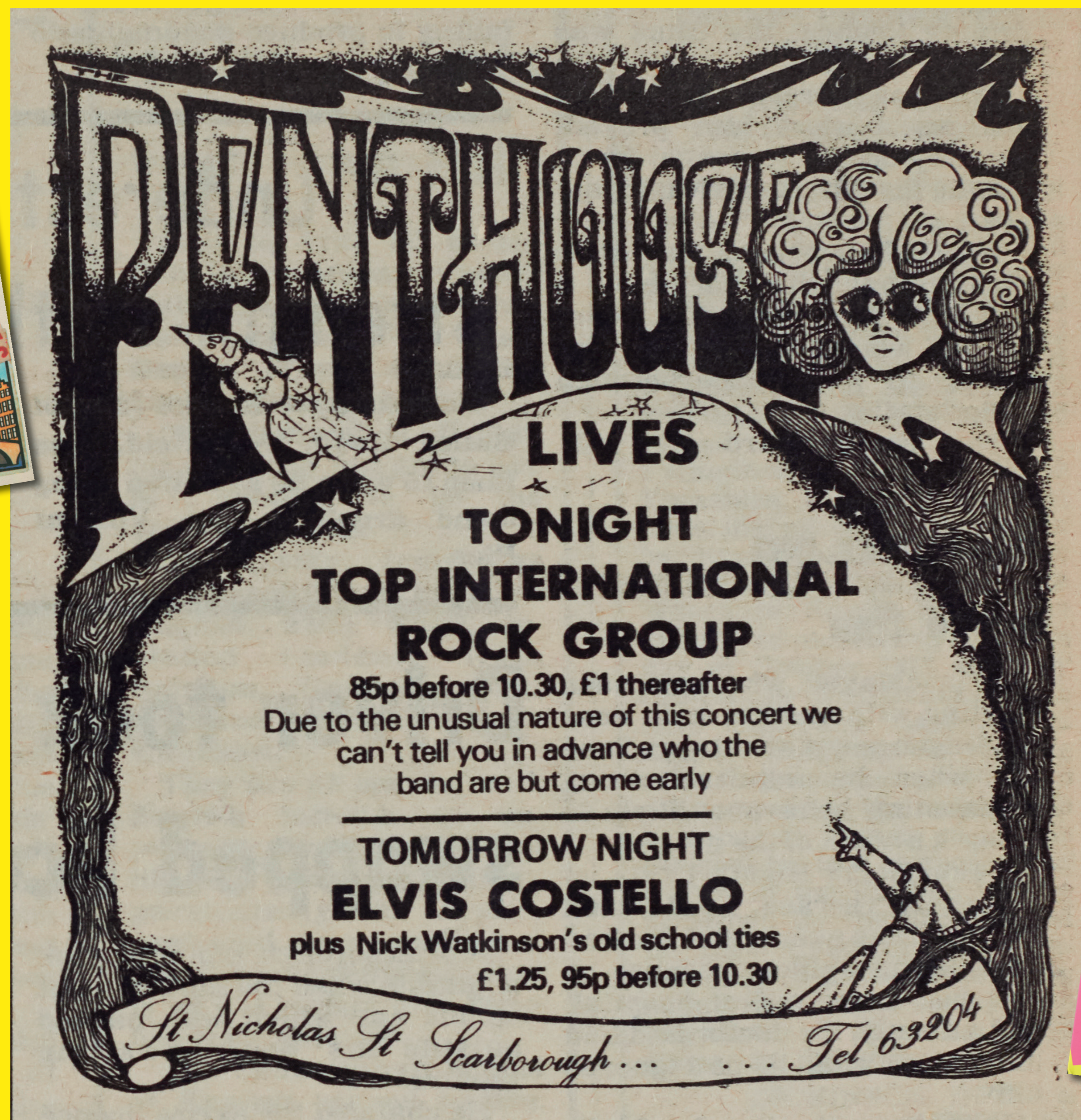


# ENGLAND'S DREAMING



Following this short tour everything intensified and accelerated for McLaren and the band. Summer 1976 saw them headline more London shows and play a pair of memorable and influential gigs in Manchester which an inordinate number of people now claim to have attended. They even returned to North Yorkshire to play a bingo and chicken-in-a-basket discotheque at Whitby and were scheduled for a return to the Penthouse in early October. Support bands and audience members were often converted to the punk cause. With this chain reaction punk quickly gained a subcultural presence.

At the start of December 1976 things took a dramatic turn. It happened in a flash. The band, or more so McLaren, had negotiated a contract with major label EMI to release the debut single 'Anarchy in the UK' for a heavily backed assault on the charts. Due to a last-minute change, the four musicians and their raucous entourage appeared on the regional early evening news and chat show Today hosted by Bill Grundy. With both parties evidently inebriated and confrontational, the interview quickly descended into an exchange of profanities and a subsequent media meltdown. The band were dropped from EMI and the national tour to promote the single immediately had dates cancelled.

As the UK entered the jubilee year of 1977, the band's aspired notoriety showed no signs of letting up. Glen Matlock was dispatched and replaced by the unhinged and unpredictable Sid Vicious, instantly racking up more controversy. With their single 'God Save the Queen' and accompanying incendiary artwork by graphic genius Jamie Reid they quickly became public enemy number one whilst topping the charts.

A summer single and a debut album saw the band looking to tour amidst the bans and hostilities, with a solution found via S.P.O.T.S. (Sex Pistols On Tour Secretly). Each gig had the band billed under an alias, though a modicum of word of mouth (in the days before social media) meant that some foreknowledge circulated. In late August they returned to the Penthouse incognito, billed as 'Top International Rock Group'. That wasn't fooling anyone.

Top: Punk in the jubilee year and the Sex Pistols return to Scarborough  
Above Right: Two-and-a-half minutes of punk pantomime – Bill Grundy and the Sex Pistols on London Weekend Television in December 1976  
Bottom: Whitby experiences punk in 1976 and the subculture starts to grow

