

Over the last decade, "Pretty Woman" Julia Roberts is probably the best-known celebrity with Atlanta connections to take root and shake things up in New York City. Before Roberts, however, such New York City mainstays as controversial club mogul Peter Gatiem, party band the B-52's, DJ supreme Anita Sarko and controversial filmmaker Spike Lee had exerted their social, cultural and artistic influence on Atlanta. We summarize their Atlanta beginnings, how they made a name for themselves, and how their Southern spark ignited media fire "positive and negative" in New York City.

# PEACH STA



## The B-52's

**STRIKING A CHORD** ■ Formed in Athens, Ga., in 1976 ■ First performance was Valentine's Day 1977, at a friend's house. ■ Signed with DB Records in Atlanta. ■ Played at the famed Max's Kansas City in New York City.

**LIGHTING UP** ■ Opened the Mudd Club on Halloween 1978; also performed at Hurrah's, CBGB's, and Club 57. ■ Signed with Warners Bros. Records in the U.S. and with Island Records in England.

**HOT STUFF** ■ Paved the commercial road for REM, Pylon and other Athens bands. ■ Had large cult following and were critical darlings until their commercial breakthrough album, *Thing* (1989).

**NEW YORK STATE OF MIND** ■ "Supermodel of the World" RuPaul was in their video for "Love Shack." ■ Covered Petula Clark's "Downtown" on their debut album.

BY A. RICHARD LANGLEY



RETNA/REUTERS

## Anita Sarko

**STRIKING A CHORD** ■ Lived in Atlanta from 1974 to 1979. ■ Encouraged by then-brother-in-law to get into radio because of her vast music knowledge, particularly hard rock. ■ DJ'd at WRAS, the radio station of Georgia State University, and at the Great Southern Music Hall. ■ Worked the Electric Ballroom the night Lynyrd Skynyrd's plane went down in 1976.

**LIGHTING UP** ■ Atlanta contacts included Danny Beard, who owned DB Records, the B-52's first label; promoter Alex Cooley; Steve Maas, who started the Mudd Club in New York City; Miles Copeland, the former manager of the Police; and David Robinson, the drummer for the Cars.

**HOT STUFF** ■ Has DJ'd at such clubs as the Mudd Club, Palladium (where she worked for Steve Rubell and Ian Schrager of Studio 54 fame), Dancesteria and Hurrah's. ■ DJ'd Andy Warhol's funeral. ■ Has written for *Soko Weekly*, *Details* and *Paper*. ■ Has rubbed elbows with countless social and entertainment figures.

**NEW YORK STATE OF MIND** ■ Is shopping her book *DJ: The Book* to publishers. ■ In true entrepreneurial fashion, she's her own manager.

# PORTERS

## Peter Gatien

**STRIKING A CHORD** ■ Late '70s, early '80s: His disco, Lighthouse, was located in the Piedmont and Peachtree Crossing Plaza in Buckhead and could hold 3,500. At different times, the space beneath the glass dance floor housed sharks and tigers. ■ Also had Lighthouse locations in Chicago, Hollywood, Fla., and London.

**LIGHTING UP** ■ A staunch Catholic, Gatien opened the New York Lighthouse in 1983 in a renovated church.

**HOT STUFF** ■ Late '80s, early '90s: Gatien ruled New York City nightlife with Lighthouse and three other clubs: Palladium, Club USA and the Tunnel. ■ Backed the notorious Club Kids, a band of gleefully attired, hedonistic and drug-sided partiers. ■ 1997: Gatien and his wife plead guilty to grand larceny and failure to file personal income taxes.

**NEW YORK STATE OF MIND** ■ Executive-produced *A Bronx Tale* (1993) and co-executive produced *Faithful* (1996), both of which starred and were written by Bronx native Chazz Palminteri. ■ Has re-opened the New York Lighthouse to mixed response.

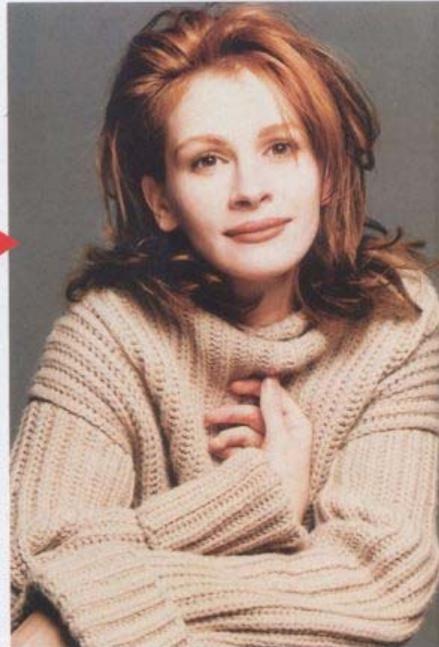
## Julia Roberts

**STRIKING A CHORD** ■ Raised in a theater-loving family in Smyrna, Ga. ■ Older brother, actor Eric Roberts, brought her into the Hollywood fold. ■ *Mystic Pizza* (1988) and *Steel Dawn* (1989) hinted at greatness.

**LIGHTING UP** ■ *Pretty Woman* (1990), *Flatliners* (1990) and *Sleeping with the Enemy* (1991) cemented her fame.

**HOT STUFF** ■ Her uneven film career, her offscreen romances with costars, her ill-fated marriage to country crooner Lyle Lovett and her alleged topless dance at a Manhattan nightspot to the song, "The Devil Went Down to Georgia," have fueled gossip fodder.

**NEW YORK STATE OF MIND** ■ Her production company, Shoelace Productions, is in New York City. ■ Appeared in Woody Allen's film, *Everyone Says I Love You*. ■ Mentioned in Bret Easton Ellis's satirical novel on fashion and entertainment, *Glamorama*. ■ Admitted in *Vanity Fair* (June 1999) that she occasionally reads the New York tabloids.



## Spike Lee

**STRIKING A CHORD** ■ Born in Atlanta. ■ Graduated from Morehouse College. ■ First film, *Last Hustle in Brooklyn* (1977), which was shot on a Super 8 camera, was an on-the-spot account of the notorious 1977 blackout in New York City.

**LIGHTING UP** ■ Earned a Master of Fine Arts in film production from New York University. ■ Student film *Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads* (1982) and debut film, the low-budget *She's Gotta Have It* (1986), garnered critical praise.

**HOT STUFF** ■ *School Daze* (1988) was set at a fictitious black school (said to reflect Lee's experiences at Morehouse College) and starred Laurence Fishburne. ■ *Do the Right Thing* (1989) earned Lee a Best Screenplay Oscar nomination and a wider audience. ■ Directed Denzel Washington in *Mo' Better Blues* (1990). ■ Opened doors for such African-American actors and filmmakers as Samuel L. Jackson, who starred in Lee's *Jungle Fever* (1991); Matty Rich, the director-writer of *Straight Out of Brooklyn* (1991); John Singleton, the director-writer of *Boyz n the Hood* (1991); and RuPaul, who made his major movie debut in Lee's *Brooklyn* (1994).

**NEW YORK STATE OF MIND** ■ Prefers to work outside the Hollywood system. ■ His 40 Acres & A Mule Filmworks venture is located in Brooklyn. ■ Rabid New York Knicks fan. ■ Most of his films are set in or around New York City and deal with social and cultural tensions. ■ His father, famed jazz musician Bill Lee, has scored many of his films.