



Get up close and personal with the star of 12 Days of Christmas, Indian style. **By Vidya Heble** ★ Viewed 2,770,600 times. Favourited 9,300 times. Commented upon 3,000 times. And that's just as we speak. By the time you read this, these numbers on the YouTube clip will have grown majorly. The animated reworking of the song 12 Days Of Christmas, Indian style, is by now a small cult hit in its own right, and has been passed from inbox to inbox and forum to forum. And It's all the product of Boymongoose, an Australian Indian boyband whose leader also goes by the same name.

Boymongoose, the ultra-cool swinging pop star with the slicked-back hair and the Elvis look, is elusive, but *India Se* managed to sit him down for a nice cup of tea and a little chat.

**India Se:** Why the name?

**Boymongoose:** My parents wanted a name that could double as a line of underwear, and Boymongoose Briefs had a nice ring to it. So they ran with it. I don't wear underwear.

**IS:** Did you think you'd become a star?

**B:** No but I hope to some day.

**IS:** How did you start out?

**B:** I grew up in a small Indian village and always loved music. I listened to a lot of different styles growing up – Tamil, Malayalam, Vanilla Ice... and tried to fuse them all together in my own career.

When I was a teenager, I knew that Indian boyband pop was what I wanted to do for a living. Strangely this didn't go down too well with my family so I ran away from home, eventually arriving in Australia.

And you know how when we Indians go overseas we form Indian Associations where we meet to watch hours of really boring cultural performances by children followed by a great feast? Well I joined one of those associations, and ended up meeting Jay, Avin and Ashwin; which turned out great because we eventually formed the boyband I'd always wanted.

**IS:** How did you get cool?

**B:** I watch a lot of Malayalam cinema. Some styles are timeless and slick hair, Ray-Ban glasses and moustaches will never date.

**IS:** Do people from other places get the Aussie references (like "dingo ate my baby")?

**B:** Not really, so we tried to limit the Australiana as much as possible. In the *12 Days of Christmas* video, there's the dingo reference and the clock on the wall in the telemarketing office that says Brisbane. Other than that, it's hopefully pretty international.

**IS:** Any hate mail?

**B:** A little bit, but I don't think you'd be able to print it. Sometimes on the YouTube comments page, people will knock us and others will step in to defend, which is sweet. And then someone will try to sell Viagra.

**IS:** Any fan mail?

**B:** Once I sent fan mail to Kal Penn.

**IS:** Have your fans wanted to date you?

**B:** Well, once a couple invited me to their house to ride on their imported rickshaws. I think they wanted to spend the day together.

**IS:** Can I date you?

**B:** Yes. What are you wearing?

**IS:** Why did you include some clichés about Indians, while introducing new elements (like the Lotus, which by the way we love)? Why didn't you make all of them fresh funnies?

**B:** The Lotus gag was kind of a dig at money-making gurus who struck it big in the '90s... you know, they'd teach these world-renouncing yoga classes and then drive off with their honeys in one of six convertibles. And day four was just a little play on Hare Krishnas, none of whom seem to be Indian. Otherwise, we just wanted to put together all the things we'd heard growing up, while trying to avoid food references as much as possible. Three butter chickens was just a cop-out.

Our other songs are more story-driven and less about the clichés. We have one called *Single Girls* that we'll be releasing this Christmas along with a new animated video. It's a rock-pop version of Jingle Bells, except it's about Internet dating and a guy who thinks he's God's gift to women.

**IS:** What do you think of the comments on YouTube?

**B:** They're funny, and it's nice to see people go to war with each other.

**IS:** Who did the fab animation?

**B:** The 12 Days video was done by our animator friend Shaun Campbell. We all sat round a table at a cute little bar called the Ice Bar in Brisbane and worked it out on the back of some napkins and a notepad.

**IS:** What next?

**B:** We'd like to keep having fun with the boyband including a new live show touring US supermarkets, and a new animated comedy. The characters are also going to be coming to life in the form of some oddball streetwear, which we'd like to get out by the end of the year. We're always open to talking to people who might like to collaborate on projects too – so if anyone has ideas, get in touch! **is**

## MEET THE BAND

★ **ASHWIN SEGKAR, 28, DRUMMER**

**IS:** In public relations.

**LOVES:** The thought of being a dive instructor.

**HATES:** Sharks.

**WOULD, IF HE COULD:** Backpack for two years and make a handycam documentary of the trip.

**ONE MORE THING:** When I was 14 at boarding school, people used to pinch my nipples and make me sing the national anthem.

★ **AVIN MATHEW, 27, KEYBOARDIST**

**IS:** A student.

**LOVES:** Listening to audio books.

**HATES:** Maybe indecisiveness?

**WOULD, IF HE COULD:** Travel to the moon, and get a photo taken of himself with the Earth in the background.

**ONE MORE THING:** Like all the Miss Universe contestants, I would love to have world peace.

★ **JAY MATHEW, 25, BASS**

**IS:** A software engineer.

**LOVES:** Sleeping in.

**HATES:** Being woken up early in the night (especially if it is due to an onset of diarrhoea).

**WOULD, IF HE COULD:** Have an underwater picnic, with various varieties of cashew nut.

**ONE MORE THING:** I like passionfruit.