



Azadoota's logo is derived from an 8th Century BC depiction of the Assyrian god Ashur. Originally shown shooting his bow from a winged sun-disc among rain clouds, we're rocking him up with a guitar.

Azadoota performs in costumes inspired by our ancient royal ancestors, Ashurbanipal, AshurNasirpal, Nebuchadnezzar – which presents a colourful spectacle and inspires discussion in the audience about Assyrian heritage, musical history and cultural continuity.

Azadoota's founder, Robin Zirwanda, was born in Iraq, where his people, the Assyrians, have lived for 7000 years. He migrated to Australia alone at age 17, with a suitcase, a guitar and not a word of English. Eventually his family joined him, and they settled in the remote Arnhem Land (NT) town of Nhulunbuy, where the bauxite mine offered plenty of work. Robin assimilated quickly into the local culture, joining a band and forming a close bond with the indigenous community, gaining an invaluable insight into another ancient culture.

When he moved back to Sydney he worked as a percussionist initially in the cabaret scene, then with original bands on the pub circuit. Then in the early nineties, the rising profile of World Music inspired Robin to start writing his own songs in his native Assyrian Neo-Aramaic language, a language that is predicted to be extinct within two generations. But although he wrote lyrics in Assyrian, Robin's music was heavily influenced by the styles he'd been performing as a percussionist, and this became the foundation for Azadoota.

We call it "contemporary Assyrian dance-rock worldbeat."



- 1996** Azadoota is formed. They launch the band with the first of many tours up the East Coast.
- 2006** Album release: *Planetary*. "A tight, tasty smorgasbord of locally produced worldbeat." - *Limelight*
- 2011** Album release: *Beyond Bridges*. "Infectious, foot-tapping, hand-clapping, body-whirling slice of exotic rhythms" - *The Australian*
- 2014** Performance highlight: *WOMADelaide*. "If one were to pick a single act that sums up the Womad spirit, it would probably be the Australian Iraqi party band Azadoota." - *The Guardian*
- 2015** Music video & single release: "Lishana (Jesus Spoke My Language)". Lishana is an upbeat rallying cry for young Assyrians to preserve their ancient language.
- 2016** Performance Highlight: *Woodford Folk Festival*. "Dance rock outfit Azadoota performed a fast-paced set of songs from the Middle East that danced the night away with a wonderful set of sounds from a mystic era." - *AU Review*
- 2017** Music video & single release: "Mazreta" (*Spinning Top*). In this song Robin uses the childhood toy as a metaphor for heritage, and its spinning with the turning of the Earth and the passage of time.
- 2018** Music video & single release: "Unity". A party anthem with a serious message, *Unity* was a top-25 semi-finalist for *World Music in the International Songwriting Competition 2018*.
- 2018** Featured Tour: *USA and Canada*. Azadoota are recognised for their work representing the Assyrian people in the global arena, performing in USA as a Culturally Unique act.
- 2018** Music video & single release: "Shinneh" (*Years*). This poignant closure ballad was the last song Robin worked on together with his late father, Iraqi pop idol Awimalk Haider.
- 2018** Music video release: "Bruni" (*Son*). Filmed at the lavish Morgan Estate in California, *Bruni* is a comedic representation of an Assyrian mother doting on her precious son. The video is a viral hit among Assyrians worldwide.
- 2019** Featured Tour: *Return to Arnhem Land*. After 43 years, Robin returns with Azadoota to the town that launched his musical career. A bittersweet trip for Robin, but Azadoota sets the whole town abuzz.