

MUSIC AND THE TRANCE PHENOMENON IN JARANAN DOR JOKO SOROH PERFORMANCE

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E-ISSN ON PROGRESS

Submitted date : 2026-06-18

Revised date : 2026-06-21

Accepted date : - 2026-06-27

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Abstract: Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh is a traditional folk performance art that continues to develop in Kebondalem Hamlet, Kademangan Village, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency. This performance is not only presented as public entertainment, but also contains ritual elements and trance phenomena known as *ndadi*. In the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance, music holds an essential role because it is believed to influence the emotional and psychological condition of the dancers until they enter a trance state. This study aims to describe the relationship between music and the trance phenomenon in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance. The study uses a qualitative descriptive method with data collection techniques consisting of observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that music in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance functions as a trigger, companion, controller, and symbolic communication medium in the trance process. Repetitive rhythmic patterns produced by instruments such as *kendang*, *jidor*, and *cimplung* are capable of creating a ritual atmosphere that affects the dancers' psychological condition until they enter a trance state. Therefore, music in Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh does not merely function as accompaniment, but also becomes the main element in shaping ritual and spiritual experiences within the supporting community.

Keywords: music, trance, Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh, ritual, folk culture

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional performing arts are an important part of Indonesian cultural identity. Performing arts do not merely function as entertainment, but also serve as a medium for cultural expression, ritual practice, and social interaction within society. In many traditional communities, these performances are closely associated with spiritual values, customary traditions, and belief systems that have been preserved and transmitted across generations. Therefore, traditional performing arts should be understood not only as artistic performances but also as cultural practices that reflect the worldview and collective identity of the communities that sustain them.

Indonesia possesses a remarkable diversity of traditional performing arts, each developing according to the historical, social, and cultural characteristics of its region. In East Java, one of the most enduring folk performances is Jaranan, a traditional art form that combines dance, music, theatrical expression, ritual practices, and elements of trance. Over time, Jaranan has evolved into several regional styles, including Jaranan Senterewe, Jaranan Pegon, Jaranan Campursari, and Jaranan Dor, each distinguished by its own musical characteristics, choreography, and ritual traditions.

Jombang Regency is one of the regions in East Java that continues to preserve various forms of traditional performing arts. Besides being widely recognized as the "City of Santri," Jombang also maintains cultural traditions such as Ludruk, Besutan, Remo Bolet Njombangan Dance, and Jaranan Dor. One of the active performing groups that continues to preserve this tradition is Jaranan Dor Joko

Soroh, located in Kebondalem Hamlet, Kademangan Village, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency. The group's continued existence demonstrates the commitment of local artists and communities to maintaining traditional cultural practices despite the influence of modernization.

Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh is a folk performance that combines dance, music, ritual, and the trance phenomenon known locally as *ndadi*. The trance phenomenon is one of the most distinctive aspects of the performance because it is regarded as a manifestation of the relationship between performers and spiritual entities believed to be present during the ritual. While many members of the community interpret trance from a spiritual perspective, academic studies suggest that trance can also be understood through anthropological, ethnomusicological, and performance studies, where music, bodily movement, ritual symbolism, and collective belief interact to produce altered states of consciousness.

Music in the Jaranan Dor performance does not merely function as dance accompaniment but also plays an essential role in shaping the emotional atmosphere and ritual progression of the performance. Instruments such as *kendang*, *jidor*, *cimplung*, *slompret*, *demung*, and *saron* are performed using repetitive rhythmic patterns with gradually increasing tempo. These musical characteristics create a structured sonic environment that influences the dancers' emotional and psychological conditions throughout the performance. As the tempo and rhythmic intensity increase, dancers perform repetitive movements that gradually lead some of them into a trance state.

The trance phenomenon in Jaranan Dor performances is often understood by society as a mystical occurrence. However, closer observation reveals that the process follows a structured sequence involving musical development, repetitive bodily movement, ritual guidance by the *bopo* (ritual leader), and the dancers' psychological readiness. Rather than functioning independently, these elements continuously interact to shape the ritual experience experienced by both performers and audiences.

Gilbert Rouget argues that music in trance rituals possesses a significant relationship with changes in human consciousness. According to Rouget (1985), music functions not only as a trigger but also as a companion, controller, and transformational medium throughout the trance process. Likewise, Merriam (1964) explains that music fulfills multiple cultural and social functions beyond entertainment, including ritual communication, emotional expression, and the reinforcement of cultural values. These theoretical perspectives provide an appropriate framework for examining the role of music in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance.

Several previous studies concerning Jaranan have discussed ritual traditions, symbolic meanings, choreography, and trance phenomena. Nevertheless, relatively few studies have specifically examined how musical structures contribute to the emergence, maintenance, and termination of trance during Jaranan Dor performances. This limitation indicates the need for a more comprehensive investigation that places music at the center of analysis rather than treating it merely as an accompanying element.

Based on this background, this study focuses on the relationship between music and the trance phenomenon in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance in Kebondalem Hamlet, Kademangan Village,

Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency. The study aims to examine the musical characteristics of the performance, analyze how music contributes to the trance process, and explain the cultural functions of music within the ritual context. Through a qualitative descriptive approach, this research is expected to contribute to ethnomusicological studies by demonstrating that music in Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh serves not only as artistic accompaniment but also as an essential medium for constructing ritual experience, preserving cultural identity, and mediating relationships between performers, communities, and spiritual beliefs.

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the relationship between music and the trance phenomenon in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance. A qualitative approach was selected because this research seeks to understand cultural practices, musical experiences, and ritual meanings from the perspectives of the people directly involved in the performance. Rather than measuring variables quantitatively, this approach enables the researcher to examine the phenomenon within its natural social and cultural context while capturing the interactions between music, performers, and ritual activities.

The research was conducted in Kebondalem Hamlet, Kademangan Village, Mojoagung District, Jombang Regency, East Java, where the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh group continues to actively perform and preserve its artistic traditions. This location was selected because the group consistently stages performances that maintain the characteristic ritual elements and trance phenomenon (*ndadi*), making it an appropriate setting for investigating the relationship between music and altered states of consciousness.

Data collection techniques included participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Participatory observation was conducted by attending several Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performances and directly observing the sequence of events, musical structures, performers' interactions, and the emergence of trance during the performance. During the observations, particular attention was given to changes in tempo, rhythmic patterns, musical dynamics, dancers' bodily responses, and the interaction between musicians and the ritual leader (*bopo*).

Interviews were conducted with individuals who possessed direct knowledge and experience regarding the performance. These informants included the leader of the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh group, musicians responsible for performing the musical accompaniment, the *bopo* who led the ritual process, and several dancers who had experienced trance during performances. Semi-structured interviews allowed participants to describe their experiences, perceptions, and interpretations while providing flexibility for the researcher to explore issues that emerged during the conversation.

Documentation was also used as supporting research data. Photographs, video recordings, field notes, and archival documents related to the performances were collected to complement observational findings and interview results. These materials assisted the researcher in reviewing musical sequences, performance

structures, and ritual activities that might not have been fully captured during direct observation.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation was carefully selected according to the research objectives. Subsequently, the organized data were presented systematically to identify patterns concerning the functions of music within the trance process. Finally, conclusions were drawn through continuous comparison between empirical findings, theoretical perspectives, and interpretations derived from the field.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher applied source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different informants, including musicians, dancers, the ritual leader, and the head of the performance group. Meanwhile, technique triangulation involved comparing data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The consistency among these various sources strengthened the validity of the research findings and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the role of music in facilitating the trance phenomenon within the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance..

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Music in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh Performance

Music in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance is played by a group of musicians using instruments such as kendang, jidor, cimlung, slompret, demung, and saron. Each instrument has a specific role in constructing the musical structure of the performance. Rather than functioning independently, these instruments interact to create a musical texture that supports the dramatic flow of the performance from the opening sequence until the closing ritual.

The kendang functions as the primary controller of tempo and musical dynamics throughout the performance. Through variations in rhythmic patterns, accents, and tempo changes, the kendang player directs transitions between performance sections while maintaining synchronization between musicians and dancers. The jidor reinforces the basic pulse by producing a deep and repetitive rhythmic foundation that strengthens the ritual atmosphere. Meanwhile, the cimlung, demung, and saron provide melodic patterns that complement the rhythmic framework, creating musical continuity throughout the performance. The slompret contributes expressive melodic phrases that emphasize dramatic moments and intensify the emotional atmosphere experienced by both performers and audiences..



Figure 1. The performance jaranan dor joko soroh

Field observations indicate that music is continuously performed during every stage of the performance, beginning with the opening ritual, continuing through the dance sequences, accompanying the trance process (ndadi), and concluding with the recovery stage when dancers gradually regain consciousness. The continuity of musical performance demonstrates that music is not simply inserted between scenes but constitutes an essential component that connects each phase of the performance into a unified artistic and ritual structure.

Changes in tempo and musical dynamics significantly influence the intensity of the dancers' movements. During the opening section, the ensemble performs at a relatively moderate tempo, allowing dancers to establish coordinated movement patterns while preparing physically and mentally for the performance. As the performance progresses, rhythmic repetition becomes increasingly dominant, accompanied by gradual acceleration of tempo and stronger accents from the kendang and jidor. These musical developments are followed by increasingly energetic dance movements, creating a reciprocal interaction between musicians and performers.

Observations further reveal that musicians do not merely perform predetermined musical compositions but actively respond to the dancers' physical conditions and the ritual leader's instructions. Whenever the dancers begin showing signs of entering a trance state, musicians adjust the tempo, rhythmic intensity, and dynamic level to support the ongoing ritual process. Likewise, during the recovery phase, the tempo gradually decreases while rhythmic complexity is reduced, assisting dancers in returning to a normal state of consciousness.

This interaction illustrates that music within the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance functions as an adaptive performance system rather than a fixed accompaniment. The musicians continuously negotiate musical decisions according to the progression of the ritual, indicating that they actively participate in shaping the performance rather than merely providing background sound.

From an ethnomusicological perspective, these findings support Merriam's concept that music fulfills multiple functions within society. Besides serving aesthetic purposes, music also performs ritual, communicative, emotional, and social functions simultaneously. In the

context of Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh, the musical ensemble constructs the ritual atmosphere, regulates performers' emotional responses, facilitates communication among musicians, dancers, and the bopo, and reinforces the collective cultural identity of the community. Therefore, music should be understood not simply as accompaniment but as an integral cultural element that sustains both the artistic and ritual dimensions of the performance

3.2 Trance Phenomenon in the Performance

The trance phenomenon, locally known as *ndadi*, constitutes one of the defining characteristics of the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance. Within the local community, trance is understood not merely as an unusual physical condition but as an inseparable part of the ritual tradition that has been preserved across generations. The occurrence of trance represents a unique moment in which artistic performance, spiritual belief, and communal participation converge, making it one of the most anticipated stages of the performance.

Based on field observations, the trance process generally develops gradually rather than occurring suddenly. At the beginning of the performance, dancers execute choreographed movements with full awareness while responding to the moderate tempo established by the musical ensemble. As the performance continues, the rhythmic patterns become increasingly repetitive, accompanied by gradual acceleration of tempo and stronger dynamic accents. At the same time, the dancers maintain repetitive body movements that require continuous concentration and physical endurance. The interaction between repetitive musical stimulation and bodily movement gradually creates conditions that facilitate changes in the dancers' state of consciousness.



Figure 2. Fenomena Trance jaranan dor joko soroh

The transition toward trance is commonly marked by observable behavioral changes. Several dancers begin to display intensified facial expressions, reduced responsiveness to their surroundings, and spontaneous movements that differ from the original choreography. In some cases, dancers appear to lose ordinary awareness while continuing to respond to the musical rhythm. These behavioral transformations indicate that trance emerges through a progressive process influenced by both internal psychological conditions and external ritual stimuli.

Field observations also demonstrate that the bopo plays a central role throughout the trance process. In addition to leading prayers and ritual incantations before the performance begins, the bopo continuously monitors the dancers' conditions during the performance. When dancers begin to exhibit signs of entering a trance state, the bopo performs symbolic gestures and verbal prayers while coordinating with the musicians to maintain the appropriate musical atmosphere. This interaction illustrates that trance is not perceived as an uncontrolled event but rather as a ritual process guided by individuals possessing cultural authority within the performance tradition.

Furthermore, the audience also contributes to the ritual atmosphere. Rather than remaining passive spectators, community members actively participate by maintaining attention, responding emotionally to the performance, and respecting the ritual process. Their collective belief in the sacred dimension of the performance strengthens the social environment in which trance occurs. Consequently, the trance phenomenon should be understood not solely as an individual psychological experience but also as a collective cultural event supported by shared beliefs and communal participation.

From the perspective of Gilbert Rouget's theory, these findings reinforce the argument that trance cannot be explained exclusively through mystical or supernatural interpretations. Rouget emphasizes that trance emerges through the interaction of music, ritual actions, bodily movement, and culturally constructed systems of belief. In the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance, repetitive rhythms, gradual tempo changes, ritual leadership by the bopo, and the dancers' psychological readiness collectively create an environment that enables altered states of consciousness to develop.

Therefore, the trance phenomenon observed in Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh should be interpreted as a multidimensional cultural process involving musical, ritual, social, and psychological elements. Each component supports the others throughout the performance, demonstrating that trance is not an isolated event but an integral part of the artistic structure that gives meaning to the entire performance tradition.

3.3 Relationship Between Music and Trance

The findings of this study demonstrate that the relationship between music and the trance phenomenon in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance is both significant and multidimensional. Rather than functioning solely as an accompaniment to dance movements, music becomes an essential element that shapes the ritual atmosphere, regulates the progression of the performance, and facilitates the emergence of trance. The interaction between musical structure, ritual activities, and performers' responses creates a performance environment in which artistic expression and spiritual practice become inseparable.

According to Gilbert Rouget, music in trance rituals performs four principal functions: as a trigger, a companion, a controller, and a transformational medium. These four functions can be clearly identified throughout the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance,

illustrating that music is actively involved in every phase of the ritual process rather than serving merely as background accompaniment.



Figure 3. The Performance jaranan dor joko soroh

As a trigger, music initiates the gradual transformation of the dancers' psychological condition. The repetitive rhythmic patterns performed by the kendang and jidor, supported by the melodic accompaniment of the cimlung, demung, saron, and slompret, create a continuous auditory stimulus that encourages sustained concentration and emotional immersion. Rather than producing an immediate effect, the repetitive musical structure gradually intensifies the dancers' engagement with the performance until some performers begin to exhibit signs of entering an altered state of consciousness.

Music also functions as a companion throughout the trance process. Once dancers enter the ndadi state, the musical performance does not stop; instead, it continues with carefully maintained rhythmic consistency and dynamic control. The continuity of the musical accompaniment preserves the ritual atmosphere while providing a stable sonic framework that supports the dancers throughout the trance experience. This finding suggests that music contributes not only to the initiation of trance but also to its maintenance during the performance.

Another important function of music is its role as a controller of the ritual process. Field observations indicate that musicians continuously adjust tempo, dynamics, and rhythmic intensity according to the dancers' physical responses and the instructions of the bopo. When the trance reaches its highest intensity, the ensemble maintains rhythmic stability to prevent disruption of the ritual. Conversely, during the recovery phase, the tempo is gradually reduced and the musical texture becomes less intense, assisting dancers in returning to ordinary consciousness. These observations demonstrate that musical decisions are closely integrated with the ritual sequence rather than being performed independently.

Furthermore, music operates as a medium of symbolic communication among musicians, dancers, the bopo, and other participants involved in the performance. Changes in tempo, rhythmic accents, and musical dynamics communicate information regarding the progression of the ritual without requiring verbal interaction.

Experienced performers understand these musical signals through long-term participation in the tradition, allowing them to coordinate their actions naturally throughout the performance. This non-verbal communication illustrates that music functions as a cultural language embedded within the performance tradition.

From the perspective of Alan P. Merriam, these findings confirm that music fulfills multiple functions simultaneously, including emotional expression, ritual activity, social communication, and cultural continuity. Within the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance, music not only supports artistic presentation but also reinforces communal beliefs, strengthens cooperation among performers, and preserves musical knowledge that has been transmitted across generations. The performance therefore represents an integrated cultural system in which music becomes an essential medium for maintaining both artistic values and ritual traditions.

Overall, the relationship between music and trance in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance demonstrates that trance cannot be understood as an isolated mystical phenomenon. Instead, it emerges through the interaction of repetitive musical structures, ritual leadership, dancers' bodily responses, and the collective beliefs of the supporting community. Music provides the structural and emotional foundation that enables these elements to interact harmoniously, transforming the performance into a meaningful cultural and spiritual experience. These findings reinforce the argument that music occupies a central position within the ritual process and should be regarded as one of the defining elements of the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh tradition rather than merely as accompaniment to dance.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that the significance of music within the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance extends beyond the ritual context itself. Music serves as a medium through which cultural values, collective memories, and traditional knowledge are continuously transmitted among members of the community. Through repeated performances, musicians, dancers, and audiences participate in a process of cultural preservation that reinforces their sense of identity and belonging. In this regard, music not only facilitates the trance experience but also contributes to the sustainability of the tradition by connecting contemporary performers with the cultural heritage inherited from previous generations. This demonstrates that the relationship between music and trance should be understood within a broader cultural framework, where musical performance functions as both a ritual mechanism and a means of maintaining the continuity of local cultural traditions.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that music plays a fundamental role in the Jaranan Dor Joko Soroh performance, extending far beyond its conventional function as dance accompaniment. The findings indicate that music serves as an essential element that shapes the ritual atmosphere, influences the dancers' emotional and psychological conditions, and facilitates the emergence of the trance phenomenon (ndadi). Through repetitive rhythmic patterns, gradual tempo changes, and dynamic interaction among musical instruments, the

performance creates an environment in which artistic expression and ritual practice become closely interconnected.

The musical ensemble, consisting of the kendang, jidor, cimlung, slompret, demung, and saron, contributes to different stages of the performance by regulating tempo, maintaining rhythmic continuity, strengthening emotional intensity, and supporting communication among performers. These musical characteristics enable the musicians to respond adaptively to the development of the ritual, particularly during the transition into trance and the subsequent recovery process. Consequently, music functions not only as an artistic component but also as an active participant in shaping the overall structure of the performance.

The findings further reveal that the trance phenomenon cannot be understood solely as a mystical or supernatural event. Instead, trance emerges through the interaction of multiple cultural elements, including repetitive musical structures, ritual leadership by the bopo, dancers' bodily movements, psychological readiness, and the collective belief system of the supporting community. This interaction reflects the complexity of Jaranan Dor Joko Soro as a traditional performance in which artistic, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions are inseparable.

The analysis also supports Gilbert Rouget's theory concerning the relationship between music and trance. In the context of the Jaranan Dor Joko Soro performance, music functions as a trigger, a companion, a controller, and a medium of symbolic communication throughout the ritual process. Furthermore, the findings are consistent with Merriam's perspective that music fulfills multiple cultural functions simultaneously, including ritual practice, emotional expression, social communication, and the preservation of cultural identity.

This research contributes to ethnomusicological studies by providing a deeper understanding of how music operates within ritual performances that involve altered states of consciousness. Rather than viewing trance as an isolated phenomenon, this study demonstrates that it should be interpreted as part of an integrated cultural system in which music becomes a central medium connecting performers, ritual practices, and community beliefs.

Nevertheless, this study is limited to a single Jaranan Dor group in Kebondalem Hamlet, Jombang Regency. Future research is therefore recommended to compare musical characteristics and trance practices among different Jaranan traditions or other ritual performances in Indonesia. Comparative studies may provide broader perspectives on the relationship between music, ritual, and altered states of consciousness within Indonesia's diverse performing arts traditions.

Beyond its contribution to the understanding of the Jaranan Dor Joko Soro performance, this study also highlights the importance of preserving traditional musical knowledge as an integral part of Indonesia's intangible cultural heritage. The findings emphasize that the continuity of this performance tradition depends not only on the preservation of its choreography and ritual practices but also on the transmission of musical skills, performance conventions, and cultural values to younger generations.

In an era of rapid social and cultural transformation, maintaining these musical traditions requires active collaboration among artists, local communities, educational institutions, and cultural organizations.

Therefore, efforts to document, study, and promote the musical aspects of Jaranan Dor should be regarded as an important strategy for safeguarding local cultural identity while ensuring the sustainability of traditional performing arts for future generations. It is also expected that the findings of this research may serve as a reference for future ethnomusicological studies focusing on the relationship between music, ritual, and altered states of consciousness in other Indonesian traditional performances.

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