

# Carnatic, Hindustani Music Come Together in Jugalbandi



Vishwa Mohan Bhatt with N. Ravikiran (r) at a jugalbandi concert in Los Altos, Calif. (Som Sharma photos)

**By ASHFAQUE SWAPAN**  
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**LOS ALTOS, Calif.** — Two discrete and equally distinguished schools of Indian music, Carnatic from South India and

Hindustani from the north, were brought together here Sept. 22 by an engaging *jugalbandi* presented by internationally known artists Vishwa Mohan Bhatt and Chitravina N. Ravikiran. The event, held in Foothill College here, was hosted by the San Francisco Bay Area chapter of the Association for India's Development, a U.S. nonprofit organization that aids projects for the underprivileged in India.

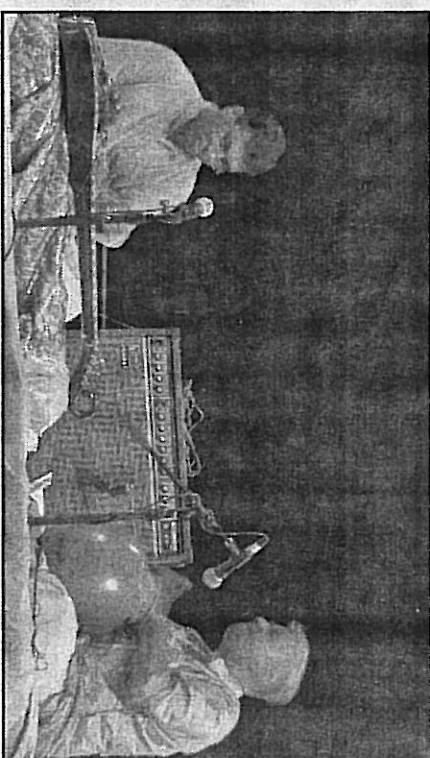
More than promoting India's distinguished classical music heritage, these two artists have gone further: each has modified a centuries-old strived musical

Ravikiran has augmented the stringed instrument chitravina he plays into what he now calls the *nava chitravina*.

The *jugalbandi* presented compositions in Rag Jog, as Bhatt and Ravikiran began the give-and-take that give such joint performances its dramatic thrust. With a playful spontaneity and a good-natured competitive spirit, the artists played around each other's music, Bhatt playing a snatch of music which Ravikiran repeated or embellished, and soon expert percussionists Subrata Bhattacharya on tabla and T.H.



Vishwa Mohan Bhatt accompanied by Subrata Bhattacharya on tabla (l).



N. Ravikiran with T.H. Subaschandran on ghatam (r).

Bhatt added to the variety, while Subaschandran had a particularly dramatic way of presenting his beats on the ghatam.

Earlier, Bhatt presented a solo performance of a composition in Rag Madhuvanti, a later afternoon raga. His instrument has converted the Hawaiian guitar into an assimilation of sitar, sarode and vina. He said he had modified the instrument to help it emit a new, longer sustaining sound which was closer to *gayaki ang*, or an approximation of vocal music. He has also incorporated a bigger fret-board and 20 strings that include 3 main, 5

Hamsananda. He has modified the external structure of the chitravina to get a higher pitch to make the instrument suitable for jugalbandis and fusion music. Like the mohan veena, Ravikiran's nava chitravina has 20 strings — 6 main, 3 side drawn and 11 sympathetic.

Both Bhatt and Ravikiran have taken their classical musical expertise to new lengths as they have been open to experimentation and exploration of newer musical frontiers.

In addition to a 1994 Grammy award for his album "A Meeting by the River" (a joint perfor-