Chouei Sato (佐藤朝栄) is a renowned artist of Northern Japanese Folk Music both as a shamisen player and vocalist. Sato made his debut on the 1984 album, Kitakuni wo Utau. In 1993, Sato received the stage-name “Chouei” from his teacher, Sato Kouei, establishing his place in the lineage of the great shamisen master Kida Rinshoei. Sato has received numerous awards for his live performances, including the 1989 competition at the Tokyo Budokan, and the 2006 Tsugaru Jamisen National Competition. Additionally, Sato has appeared as an accompanist for vocalists on countless recordings and on television performances, and he has recently released a new album of his solo work and group arrangements for shamisen, "Tamashii no Hibiki" (2006). Currently, along with teaching private lessons, Sato leads two shamisen groups, the "Towa Sangenkai" and the "Choueikai." He performs regularly with these groups and as a soloist, and has recently made appearances on TV Iwate and the Japanese Public Broadcasting Station NHK.

Chieko Shirogane (白銀千栄子) has been studying the shamisen with Mr. Sato since 2001 and dance with Ms. Kanoko Tanaka since 2009. Now she performs both dance and shamisen with Mr. Sato in festivals and events across the Tohoku area. Last year, Chieko lost her family home in the March 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. This evening, through her performance, she hopes to express her thanks to the American people for all their support to Japan throughout this crisis.

Simon Hutchinson is a PhD student in Composition and Music Technology at the University of Oregon. He began studying the shamisen in 2002, while working as an International Specialist for a small township in Iwate Prefecture. Now, while pursuing his PhD in the US, Simon returns to Japan every summer to continue his studies with Mr. Sato.

CO-SPONSORS: Oregon Humanities Center’s Endowment for Public Outreach in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities; and the UO Center for Asian & Pacific Studies.

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112th Season, 35th program
PROGRAM

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十三の砂山（青森県）

Tsugaru Aiya Bushi (Aomori Prefecture)
津軽あいや節（青森県）

* * *

PROGRAM NOTES

Tonight’s performance will consist of several Japanese min’yo (民謡), or folk songs, from the Tohoku (Northeast) area of Japan. Min’yo are regionally distinct and often the lyrics contain proclamations of the beauty of the local landscape. As seen in the list of pieces above, most of the songs’ titles are prefaced with the name of a geographical area, such as the Northwestern Tsugaru Peninsula in Aomori, or the Nanbu area, modern-day Iwate Prefecture. Min’yo are often accompanied by taiko, shakuhachi, or shamisen. The sub-genre of Tsugaru Jamisen (津軽三味線) music, a rhythmic, virtuosic style of solo shamisen playing, emerged from the shamisen accompaniments of Aomori min’yo. While this genre first appeared in the late 19th century, it has experience a boom in popularity since the mid-20th century, as a style that has the rhythmic appeal of modern popular music, but remains a distinctly Japanese tradition.