

## **New Nyckelharpa for Boulder Spelemannslag**

*\$1000 Grant from the Alex "Tink" Wilson Legacy Fund - Sept 2018*

The Boulder Spelemannslag is an ensemble of young musicians who play music for Scandinavian dancing, under the direction of Sharon Gillespie. The group has been in existence for more than 30 years and has performed at the Midsummer's Festival in Lindsborg, Kansas, as well as many venues in Colorado.

Children can join the group around 4th or 5th grade and "graduate" at the end of high school, but remain members for life. Many of them gather annually to play at the Boulder Scandinavian Dancers' Christmas Party, some traveling from their colleges across the country for the occasion.



*Bennett Ford and Liam Wood, Boulder Spelemannsalag members*

The group relies on authentic folk instruments to create the beautiful Scandinavian music that enriches our community life. One of those instruments is the nyckelharpa, a traditional Swedish keyed fiddle where keys, rather than fingers, depress the strings to change the pitch. Depictions of this unique instrument have been found in a relief from Gotland dating from 1350 and in early church paintings in Italy from 1408.

Since the Spelemannslag had more experienced nyckelharpa players than instruments, they applied for a grant to purchase another one. The grant was conditional on their independently raising \$1,000 in matching funds. The community supported them wholeheartedly in this project and the group is now the proud owner of a new nyckelharpa. The instrument was built by Enar Magnusson, of Obbola, Sweden, just outside of Umeå, between 2013 and 2015.