

The Friends of Melba Shepard

Melba's 90th Birthday Party

March 12, 2016 at the Avalon Ballroom in Boulder, Colorado

\$1,000 Grant from the Alex "Tink" Wilson Legacy Fund - February 2016



What a beautiful celebration of community Melba's 90th Birthday Party was! Alex's spirit was alive in every minute!

We had dancers and children of dancers! Cousins and parents and grandparents of dancers! Melba, at 90, may have been the oldest there, while the youngest -- Jack, aged 3 ½ -- oversaw the huge Grand March perched on the tall shoulders of his grandfather Chuck. This is the community which Melba has fostered, led, and enjoyed during her 50 years in Boulder.



Twenty members of the Spelmannslag, Boulder's Scandinavian youth orchestra, played for dancing, as well as long-time stalwarts, Dave, Geoff, Mike, Erica and Sheila. For a change, Planina got to sing their songs from eastern Europe for dancers.

The Avalon's 5,000 sq ft ballroom was a riot of color with borrowed vintage tablecloths, balloons, flowers, and elegant folk costumes. The crowd enjoyed doing a Romanian dance, Alunelul, with customized words -- 'IF you want to DANCE like Melba, DANCE LIKE THIS!'



Slideshows and photo albums covering Melba's 90 years, plus toasts, songs and stories, were followed by a parade of fancy cakes. Leading the parade was 11-year-old Evan, a son and grandson of dancers, playing his nyckelharpa. The evening closed with Melba's pre-chosen favorite songs for swing dancing from the '40s.

At least 200 friends came to share the fun, and almost every one of them helped with the event in a material way. Some played and sang, most danced, all shared their own dishes and enjoyed their neighbors'. Probably half of them helped with the less glamorous tasks of lifting, moving, storing and cleaning. Our forefathers and mothers had barn-raising. We had a party-raising!

Thanks again to the Alex "Tink" Wilson Legacy Fund and Boulder Dance Coalition for their support of this epic event!



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Photos by Susan Reisser

Party Invitation by Jane Shepard