**Rachel Bell’s bio**

Rachel Bell started out as a serious classical pianist, took a brief side trip to the bagpipes, and accidentally fell in love with the accordion when her college flute teacher unexpectedly foisted one on her. Now based in Brattleboro, VT, she hauls her accordion all over North America and even overseas, sharing her contagious enthusiasm for the instrument and forging authentic connections with audiences everywhere. Her playing spans an enormous range of emotion, from nuanced and sensitive to exhilarating and powerful, pushing the boundaries of what is expected from an accordion. This performer, tunesmith, and teacher is highly sought after for concerts, contra dances, French bal folk dances, English country dances, camps, and festivals. She draws her inspiration from Celtic, French, English, Quebecois, and New England traditions, cranking out new material while deeply respecting and cherishing the melodies that have been around for centuries. Rachel thrives on ensemble work, especially with her bands Eloise & Co., Peregrine Road, Alchemy, and Old World Charm School. Part of her collaborative work involves an exciting joint composition project, with choreographer Susan Kevra creating English country dances that fit Rachel’s tunes like a glove. Much of this repertoire already appears regularly on dance programs throughout North America and abroad. Rachel is also a seasoned teacher, with individual lessons and group workshop offerings for both children and adults. During the pandemic, she has worked hard to find avenues for continuing all of these activities through virtual events, but she dreams of the day when music can once again become a shared in-person community experience.