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**Big Ears, in association with Ijams Nature Center,
announces *Ellen Reid SOUNDWALK***

Following installations in Central Park and Golden Gate Park, Oak Ridge native and 2019 Pulitzer Prize winner Ellen Reid brings her immersive audio public art experience back home to East Tennessee

Big Ears is excited to announce that composer Ellen Reid — 2019 Pulitzer Prize for Music winner and Oak Ridge native — will create a version of her signature work, *SOUNDWALK*, at Ijams Nature Center in Knoxville. The work consists of music composed by Reid specifically for the project — recorded by her own all-star ensemble, as well as the renowned Kronos Quartet. Accessible on your smartphone by downloading a free app, the work uses GPS to unfold and transform as a listener wearing headphones walks through Ijams' network of trails.

Conceived to be installed in multiple cities simultaneously, Reid launched her initial *SOUNDWALK* in September of 2020, in conjunction with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, mapping the entirety of New York's Central Park. Other presentations of *SOUNDWALK* have now been offered in Los Angeles at Griffith Park and in San Francisco at Golden Gate Park, among other locations. Now, Reid is excited to bring a *SOUNDWALK* to her native East Tennessee.

"*SOUNDWALK* is an intimate project," Reid said. "It's about introspection and taking time alone with your thoughts while connecting with nature. This special installation for Big Ears features one of my favorite ensembles, the Kronos Quartet — I've been inspired by them since I was a teenager, so this is truly a homecoming on many levels, and a celebration of the natural beauty of East Tennessee that was the backdrop of my childhood."

SOUNDWALK consists of musical cells, carefully crafted by the composer to harmonize with the surrounding landscape, with surprises — musical "Easter eggs" — hidden within to accentuate some of the special features of the nature center. The choice of paths and the pace at which they are explored determine the music each listener hears, ensuring that no two visits are ever quite the same.

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“We’ve presented some of Ellen’s music previously at Big Ears and have continued to discuss further ideas with her,” Big Ears’ Executive Director Ashley Capps said. “When we first learned about *SOUNDWALK* when it was launched last September in Central Park, it struck us as especially perfect in connecting Big Ears’ musical vision with the natural beauty here in our community. We asked Ellen if she would bring this special project back home, and it turned out that she was already thinking about that as well. We’re thrilled to help make it happen.”

“Ijams Nature Center is proud to partner with Big Ears to encourage its visitors to experience the natural world in a new, creative way,” Ijams Executive Director Amber Parker said. “Ijams hosted John Luther Adams’ *Inuksuit* as part of the 2016 Big Ears Festival, and it was wonderful. We love the idea of having Ellen Reid’s *SOUNDWALK* here and can’t wait to see how people respond.”

Ellen Reid SOUNDWALK at Ijams Nature Center will launch in September 2021, in conjunction with the announcement of the lineup for Big Ears 2022, scheduled for March 24-27. *SOUNDWALK* will be at Ijams for one year. For more information, visit www.bigearsfestival.org/news-soundwalk

Big Ears Festival

The mission of the Big Ears Festival, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is to bring artists and audiences together to create and share transformative experiences with a borderless mix of music, film, and conversation. Described as “one of the most quietly earth-shattering, subtly luminous festivals the world over” by the Oxford American and “one of the world’s greatest music bashes” by The New York Times, the Big Ears Festival has established itself as one of the most exciting and imaginative cultural gatherings anywhere. The festival brings together a Who’s Who of established and acclaimed iconoclasts, innovators, and luminaries with inspired younger artists who are making fresh, new creative work. Big Ears occurs in the heart of downtown Knoxville, Tennessee, taking place in over a dozen historic theaters, intimate clubs, majestic churches, and unique alternative performance spaces. Substantial support for the festival comes from the donors and sponsors in the Knoxville community, as well as across the country. www.bigearsfestival.org

Ijams Nature Center

Ijams Nature Center is a nonprofit, 318-acre educational nature center for all ages, abilities and walks of life. Ijams’ mission is to encourage stewardship of the natural world by providing an urban greenspace for people to learn about and enjoy the outdoors through engaging experiences. Located just three miles from downtown Knoxville, Ijams features 12 miles of hiking and mixed-use trails, a public access river dock, swimming, boating, biking and more. The center offers hundreds of educational programs annually, from school field trips and off-site programs to on-site outdoor and classroom education programs that focus on topics from birding and wildflowers to yoga hikes, cooking classes and art programs. The Ijams grounds and trails are open every day from 8 a.m. until dusk. www.ijams.org

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