



## 2007 Alumni Honor Roll | Reasons to Believe



Role models who give us *Reasons to Believe* in the power of education

**Jason Bahr**

**Sumner Academy of Arts and Science, 1991**

Most mornings before high school, Jason Bahr could be found in the music room at Sumner Academy of Arts and Science, plucking out tunes on the piano. His interest in music was highly visible, that's why vocal music teacher Cathy Crispino encouraged him to join the choir. He followed suit and that choice sent him on a journey to a fulfilling career in the music field.

One day, Bahr showed Crispino some music he was writing and she took his work seriously and encouraged him to learn about conducting. She even let him direct the choir. Soon, he was taking a music theory class with William Leafblad, instrumental music teacher, gaining his support as well.



"Both of them took the music I was writing seriously," Bahr recalls. "They looked at it and supported it. They invested themselves in it. Without them, I don't know where I would be today."

Today Bahr is the assistant professor of music theory and composition at Mississippi State University. He works with aspiring musicians, teaching them about music theory, orchestration, ear training and more. He is also an accomplished composer. In fact, he has received more than 150 performances of his work. He is the recipient of the highly distinguished MacDowell Colony Residency, a Fromm Foundation Commission, and in 2005, won the Northridge Prize for Orchestral Composition. His works have been featured at many Society of Composers, Inc., national and regional conferences.

Bahr received his bachelor's degree in music from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and his master's and doctorate in music from Indiana University.

He said the demands of his teachers at Sumner Academy gave him a strong work and study ethic that helps him today in his career.

He wants today's students to know that they can do anything if they apply themselves.