Speech Critique: Billy Joel Essay, Research Paper

Speech Critique

Billy Joel is a very well known musician that is respected and acknowledged all around the world. I think he was an appropriate speaker for a college graduation.

He used one question at the beginning of the speech that would catch the audiences curiosity; “Why do musicians give so much time to charitable causes?” and branched out from there to important issues. I think this showed a sense of organization and importance to the issue of why he was there.

From the commencement of the speech Billy Joel set a personal and comfortable tone. He spoke to the graduates on a level of equality using phrases like “maybe its because we know…”, and “Our experience is not so different from those who march to the beat of a different drummer.” Which also served as a pun. He used phrases like “common emotion” and referred to musicians like “family”. He was able to relate to the graduates and made it easy for the graduates to relate to him, giving reused questions like “when are you going to get a real job? When are you going to get serious about life?” that musicians are often faces with. He also uses the technique of mentioning famous names to catch the attention of the audience. I also noticed that he chose musicians from different types of music and different times in history he went from Beethoven to Milli Vanilli to Bob Marley. So pretty much everyone could relate.

Since Billy Joel has been so successful, his past experiences can be a way learning and encouragement for the graduates. He refers back to when he was 19 and explains how his career began. He spoke about his “little jobs” and how he was barely making enough money to pay his bills. Most of the graduates are probably going through that stage in their life now. I think he referred to this as a sense of motivation for the graduates. Throughout the speech he gives out tips and advice about making it in the entertainment world. Since he is so respected as a musician this advice is valuable to the graduates.

He made music sound like the most important thing in the world, which I think gave a lot of importance to the graduates. He called the talent they had a gift that only unique people like them had. The way he explained music, made musicians sound like the center of it all; music heals, encourages, and even persuades people. It gave the graduates a feeling of importance like their role in society can make a difference in the world.

Overall I enjoyed this speech. I think it was appropriate since it was so encouraging. These graduates are about to embark on a new stage in life filled with fears and insecurities and they need all the advice an encouragement they can get. He spoke on a very down to earth level, which made it easy to understand and relate. I think every graduate could leave that speech feeling Billy Joel was not only a role model but also a friend.