



Y-O-U



Dear You,

My isolation reading this week has taken in 'Learning To Listen: The Jazz Journey of Gary Burton'. This is the autobiography of jazz vibraphone player Gary Burton. It's not the greatest book ever written but it might just be the best autobiography ever written by a gay jazz vibraphone player. It's very much from the "this happened and then this happened" school of autobiography and the words just don't flow as freely as the notes do when Gary picks up the hammers, but the story of Gary discovering the world of jazz and his own sexual identity, at the same time, is not something I have come across in a jazz autobiography. What struck me is that Gary was just so great from a young age. Once he established himself it seems like he never practised ever again, I guess the information was just there in his brain and he could access it whenever he felt like it. Gary is known for pioneering the four mallet grip which is commonly known these days as the "Burton Grip" and appears on the cover ~~of the~~ holding four mallets in one hand and I'm not



sure if it's a camera angle thing or if it is just this way but Gary's right hand on the cover of the book is crazy large, it's like a King Kong hand which I guess would come in useful if you were pioneering the four mallet grip in the late 1950's. Gary was also a teacher for most of his career and with this book we see the rare positive representation of the teacher ~~in~~ in popular culture - no Twisted Sister's, 'I Wanna Rock' style teacher here. Anyway, I'm hanging in there. I spent the week working through the circle of fifths and thinking about minor pentatonic scales. Imagine if this was my regular life! Just sitting around the house reading jazz autobiographies, working through the circle of fifths and minor pentatonic scales before ~~settling~~ settling down in the middle of the day to listen to Giant Steps in bed. I don't know if it would make me a better jazz musician or just a boring, flabby piece of cardboard with no life experience at all. I guess time will tell. I'll speak to you again soon.

From Luke