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‘Like the Phoenix Being Born Again’

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Buried like a jewel in Alvin Ailey's 1960 masterpiece "Revelations" is a searing male solo set to the spiritual "I Wanna Be Ready." In it, the dancer begins folded over a knee and raises his arm three times — low,

higher and highest — and prepares for death. For Glenn Allen Sims, above, an Ailey veteran: "It's just a pool of light and really simple exercises, but they're hard. It's not just a set of steps — you have to be able to speak through them. It's your final prayer. One of my favorite moments is the opening. It's as if you're rising

from the ground, so it's almost like the phoenix being born again." Before he steps onstage, Mr. Sims said he thinks about people he's lost in his own life. He asks himself a question: "If this was my last chance to dance ever in my life, what would I want to say?"

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