In this pioneering musicological study, the Danish emeritus professor Finn Egeland Hansen proposes that the classical-romantic mainstream current of the 19th century in fact represents two sub-currents, one focusing on the romantic aspects, the other focusing on the classical aspects of its musical style. His thesis is discussed with excerpts from the standard musicological literature plus writings by Saint-Saëns, and Finn Egeland Hansen exemplifies his argument in readings of the music by three stylistically different composers – the French Camille Saint-Saëns and Charles Gounod and the Danish Niels W. Gade. Finn Egeland Hansen labels these harbingers' style as retro-classicism.