# Damien Cain Wins 2026 InterContinental Music Award for 'Standarte'

*The Ireland-based artist wins for a bilingual anti-war song exploring violence, belief, obedience and the human urge to follow.*

MOUNTMELLICK, LAOIS, IRELAND, September 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Ireland-based alternative rock and metal artist Damien Cain has won the 2026 InterContinental Music Award (ICMA) for "Standarte" in the European Metal category.

> "Standarte is much more than a song about war. It asks why people surrender their own judgement and become willing to follow a flag, an ideology or a supposed truth."
>
> *Damien Cain*

The award was announced during the 14th Annual InterContinental Music Awards Online Awards Ceremony on August 23. Based in Los Angeles, the ICMA recognises artists from around the world through an independent professional judging process. The 2026 jury included GRAMMY® winners and voting members, Emmy® winners, Billboard-charting artists, composers, producers, songwriters and music executives.

For Cain, the choice of "Standarte" matters. The track is not only the title song of his current album, but one of the most personal and philosophical pieces he has written.

Performed in both German and English, "Standarte" moves through images of marching armies, religious symbolism, political obedience, revolt and social collapse. Its central question is less about who is right or wrong than about why people can be drawn into hatred, violence and blind allegiance in the first place.

"For me, 'Standarte' is much more than a song about war," says Cain. "It reflects the way I see the world. There is no meaningful reason to start wars, spread violence or accept discrimination. But I am interested in what happens before that point: where blind anger comes from, why people surrender their own judgement and why they become willing to follow a flag, an ideology or a supposed truth."

The song is also a distant continuation of "Wallenstein", a composition Cain first wrote in the early 1990s. The earlier piece catalogued contemporary disasters and the speed with which they

disappeared from public memory. More than three decades later, “Standarte” revisits the same concerns from a broader, more philosophical perspective.

Another influence reaches back even further: Salvador Dalí’s Christ of Saint John of the Cross, which Cain first saw in Glasgow.

“That image stayed with me,” he says. “I kept wondering what Jesus might see from that height if the view extended beyond the fishermen and boats in the painting to everything happening in the world below. I don’t approach that as a religious question. For me it is philosophical: what does human behaviour look like when you step far enough away from it?”

Musically, “Standarte” combines melodic metal, dark rock and cinematic atmosphere with Cain’s emphasis on melody and storytelling. The album STANDARTE was released through Audio-To-Go and mixed and mastered in Dublin by Ivan Jackman, whose credits include Hozier, Sinéad O’Connor and The Dubliners.

The award follows a year of growing international attention for the album. STANDARTE reached #4 in the American Alternative Charts, while Cain’s music has received airplay on more than 200 individual radio stations in over 45 countries. He had already achieved the unusual distinction of placing two songs from the same album — “Fascinating Face” and “Standarte” — among the 2026 ICMA finalists in the European Metal category.



Alternative Rock Artist Damien Cain © Joe Conroy




Artwork of Damien Cain's Album Standarte

About Damien Cain

Damien Cain is a German-born, Ireland-based singer, songwriter and composer whose career began in the alternative, progressive and dark-rock underground of the late 1980s.

As founder and central creative force behind CAIN, he scored an early success with “Age of Darkness”, which sold more than 250,000 copies in Europe and received IMPALA Diamond recognition. He later wrote the lyrics for L’Âme Immortelle’s “Dein Herz”, which entered the German charts, and created the Edgar Allan Poe-inspired “Elenore”, performed by Sir Christopher Lee. CAIN’s album Moonstruck also featured Wayne Hussey of The Mission.



Damien Cain is 2026's Winner in "European Metal"

Cain also wrote the libretto for an early German-language Dracula musical, staged for more than two years. That theatrical background still feeds into the visual and narrative side of his songwriting.

Now based in Ireland, Cain’s current work moves between alternative rock, melodic metal, gothic atmosphere, Celtic undertones and cinematic melancholy.

About the InterContinental Music Awards

Founded in 2011 and headquartered in Los Angeles, the InterContinental Music Awards is an international music competition open to artists of every nationality, language, genre and career stage. Entries are assessed through independent professional judging based on artistic merit, originality, musicianship, composition, production quality and creative expression. Since its founding, the ICMA has honoured artists representing more than 100 countries.

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