

Supporting information for:

## Dehydration of Aldoximes Using PhSe(O)OH as the *Pre-Catalyst* in Air

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## Screening of Catalysts for the Dehydration of 1q

Table S1. Screenings of the Catalysts for Dehydration of 1q.

$$\text{1q} \xrightarrow[\text{MeCN, 65 } ^\circ\text{C, air, 24 h}]{\text{Se Cat. (5 mol \%)}} \text{2q} + \text{3q}$$

entry	Se Cat.	2q / % <sup>a</sup>	3q / % <sup>a</sup>
1	PhSe(O)OH	25	37
2	4-MeC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> Se(O)OH	9	18
3	3,5-(CF <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>3</sub> Se(O)OH	17	8
4	3-FC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub> Se(O)OH	52	20

<sup>a</sup> Isolated yields based on **1q**.

## Experimental Section

### General methods

Reagents were purchased from reagent merchant with their purities more than 98% and were directly used as received. Solvents were analytical pure (AR) and directly used without any special treatment. Melting points were measured by WRS-2A digital instrument. IR spectra were measured on Bruker Tensor 27 Infrared spectrometer. <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker Avance 600/400 instrument (600 or 400 MHz for <sup>1</sup>H and 150 MHz for <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectroscopy) using CDCl<sub>3</sub> as the solvent and Me<sub>4</sub>Si as the internal standard. Chemical shifts for <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR were referred to internal Me<sub>4</sub>Si (0 ppm) and *J*-values were shown in Hz. Mass spectra were measured on a Shimadzu GCMS-QP2010 Ultra spectrometer (EI).

### General procedure for the synthesis of organonitriles **2**

To a reaction tube, 1 mmol of aldoxime **1** and 9.5 mg of PhSe(O)OH (0.05 mmol, 5 mol %) were heated in 2 mL of MeCN at 65 °C. The reaction was monitored by TLC. When the reaction terminated, the solvent was evaporated under vacuum and the residue was isolated by flash column chromatography on silica gel using petroleum ether and ethyl acetate (12/1) as the eluent, giving the corresponding organonitriles **2**.

## GC-MS Analysis for Mechanism Study

### (1) Test of the Stability of MeCN in the Reaction

0.5 mmol of PhSe(O)OH was heated in 1 mL MeCN at 65 °C for 24 h. The mixture was then sent to GC-MS analysis. As shown in Fig. S1, besides the MeCN and the solvent EtOAc, no obvious oxidation product was observed.

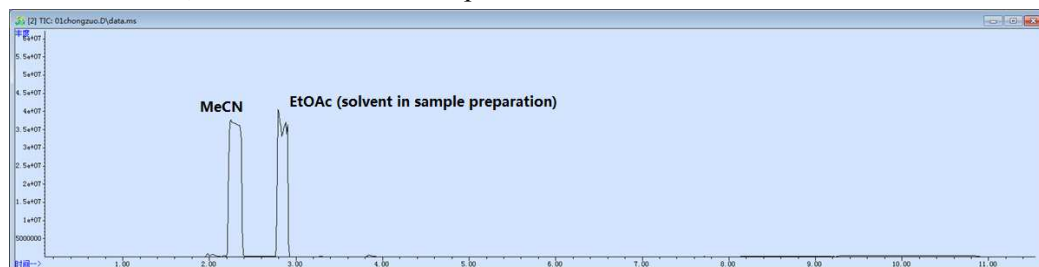


Fig. S1

### (2) Test of the Stability of EtOH in the Reaction

0.5 mmol of PhSe(O)OH was heated in 1 mL EtOH at 65 °C for 24 h. The mixture was then sent to GC-MS analysis. As shown in Fig. S2 and confirmed by Fig. S3, besides EtOH and the solvent EtOAc, MeCHO, the oxidation product of EtOH was observed.

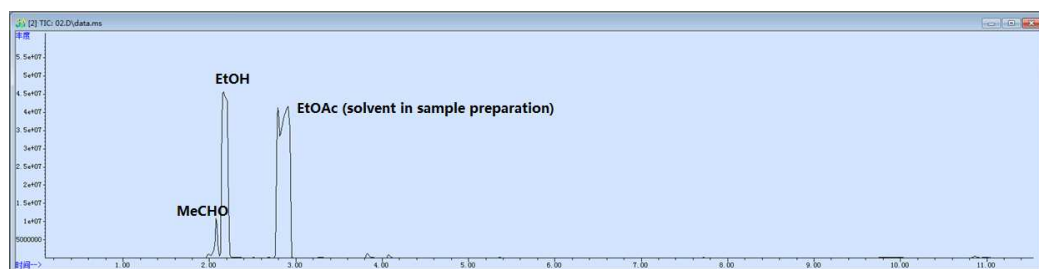


Fig. S2

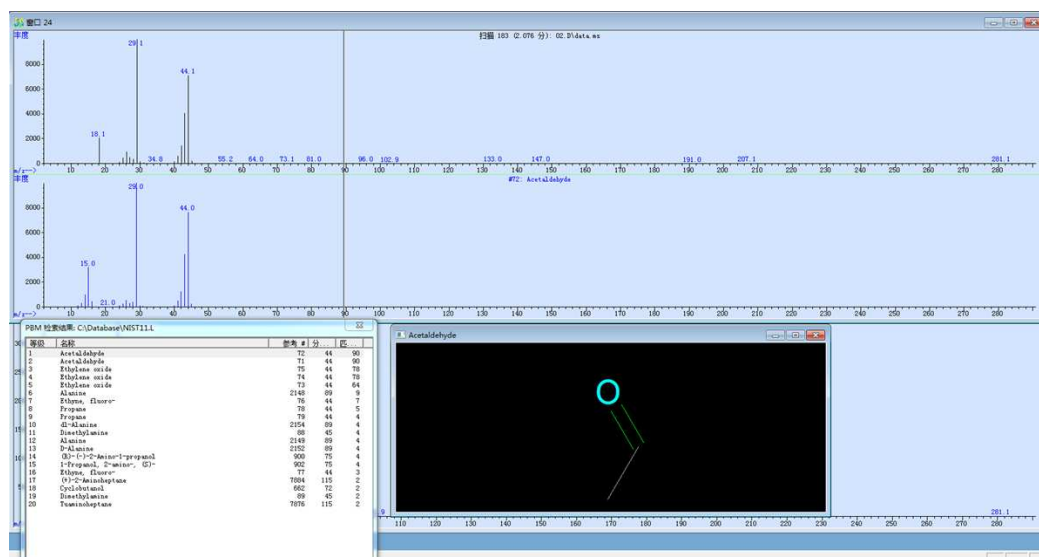
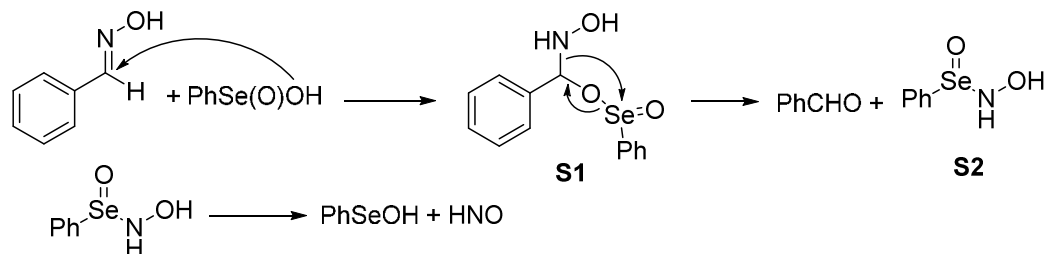


Fig. S3

### (3) Test of the Stability of Aldoxime in the Reaction

0.5 mmol of PhSe(O)OH and 0.5 g of aldoxime **1a** (PhCH=NOH) were heated at 65 °C for 24 h. The mixture was then sent to GC-MS analysis. As shown in Fig. S4 and confirmed by Figs. S5-6, besides the product PhCN and the solvent EtOAc, PhCHO and PhCOOH were observed. Because there is no water in the system, we supposed that PhCHO was the **oxidation** product of aldoxime but **not** the hydration product. The possible mechanism was given in Scheme S1. The nucleophilic addition of PhSe(O)OH with aldoxime led to the intermediate **S1**, which then decomposed to PhCHO and **S2**. Further selenoxide elimination of **S2** generated the catalytic species PhSeOH and HNO. PhCHO was further oxidized by PhSe(O)OH to PhCOOH.



Scheme S1

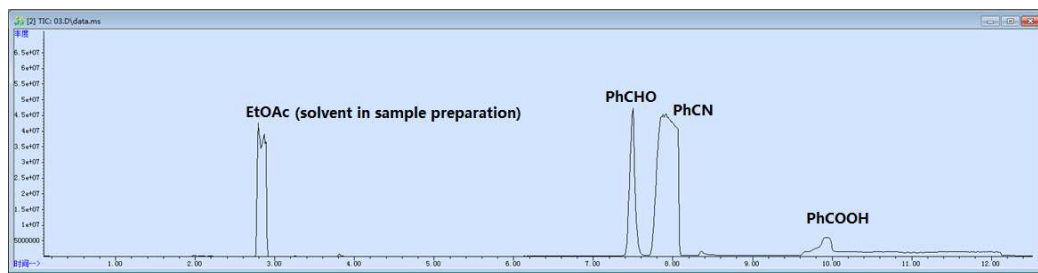


Fig. S4

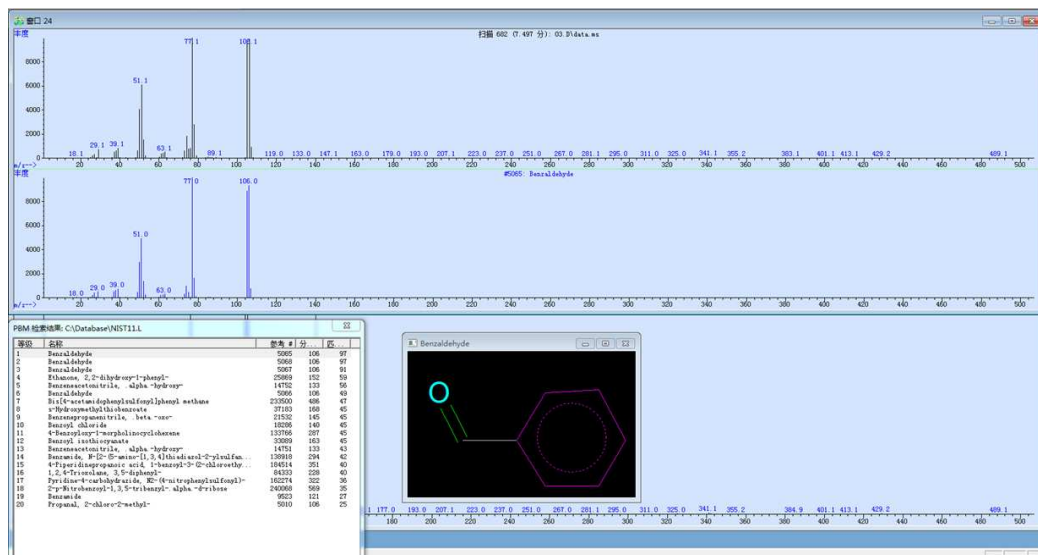
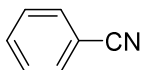


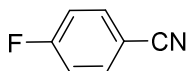
Fig. S5



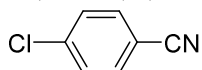
## Characterization of the Products



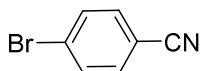
**Benzonitrile 2a** 438.2 mg, Oil; IR (film): 3066, 2259, 1490, 1447, 758 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (600 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  7.62 (s, 3H), 7.46 (s, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (150 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  132.8, 132.1, 129.2, 118.8, 112.4; MS (EI, 70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 103 [ $\text{M}^+$ ] (100), 76 (16); Known compound.<sup>1</sup>



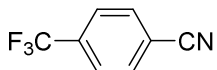
**4-Fluorobenzonitrile 2b** 466.2 mg, Oil; IR (film): 3076, 2232, 1603, 1508, 1240, 842, 685 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  7.71-7.68 (m, 2H), 7.19 (t,  $J$  = 8.6 Hz, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  165.0 (d,  $J_{\text{C-F}}$  = 255 Hz), 134.7 (d,  $J_{\text{C-F}}$  = 9.4 Hz), 118.0, 116.8 (d,  $J_{\text{C-F}}$  = 22.6 Hz), 108.5 (d,  $J_{\text{C-F}}$  = 3.6 Hz); MS (EI, 70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 122 [ $\text{M}^+ + 1$ ] (8), 121 [ $\text{M}^+$ ] (100), 94 (33); Known compound.<sup>1</sup>



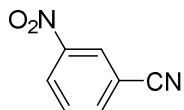
**4-Chlorobenzonitrile 2c** 564.2 mg, Solid, m.p. 93.3-94.1 $^\circ\text{C}$  (*lit.* 93-94  $^\circ\text{C}$ ); IR (KBr): 3092, 3039, 2225, 1593, 1483, 1399, 1263, 830, 544 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  7.61 (d,  $J$  = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.48 (d,  $J$  = 8.0 Hz, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  139.5, 133.4, 129.7, 117.9, 110.8; MS (EI, 70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 137 [ $\text{M}^+$ ] (100), 102 (42); Known compound.<sup>1</sup>



**4-Bromobenzonitrile 2d** 800.8 mg, Solid, m.p. 112.9-113.2 $^\circ\text{C}$  (*lit.* 113-114  $^\circ\text{C}$ ); IR (KBr): 3086, 2224, 1583, 1478, 1067, 824, 542 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (600 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  7.63 (d,  $J$  = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 7.53 (d,  $J$  = 7.8 Hz, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (150 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  133.4, 132.7, 128.0, 118.1, 111.3; MS (EI, 70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 183 (65), 181 [ $\text{M}^+$ ] (70), 102 (100); Known compound.<sup>1</sup>

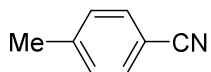


**4-(Trifluoromethyl)benzonitrile 2e** 718.6 mg, Oil; IR (film): 2993, 2235, 1758, 1322, 1249, 1176, 1135, 1067, 847, 731 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  7.83 (d,  $J$  = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.77 (d,  $J$  = 8.4 Hz, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  134.5 (d,  $J_{\text{C-F}}$  = 33.2 Hz), 132.7, 126.1 (d,  $J_{\text{C-F}}$  = 3.8 Hz), 123.0 (d,  $J_{\text{C-F}}$  = 271.5 Hz), 117.4, 116.0; MS (EI, 70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 172 [ $\text{M}^+ + 1$ ] (11), 171 [ $\text{M}^+$ ] (100), 121 (87); Known compound.<sup>1</sup>

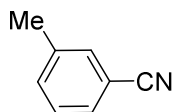


**3-Nitrobenzonitrile 2f** 120.0 mg, Solid, m. p. 114.2-115.1 $^\circ\text{C}$  (*lit.* 114-115  $^\circ\text{C}$ ); IR (KBr): 3080, 2875, 2236, 1618, 1535, 1355, 817, 560 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  8.50 (d,  $J$  = 11.2 Hz, 2H), 8.04 (s, 1H), 7.79 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  148.2, 137.7, 130.8, 127.6, 127.2, 116.6, 114.0; MS (EI,

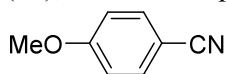
70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 148 [ $M^+$ ] (37), 102 (100); Known compound.<sup>2</sup>



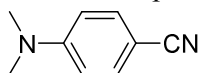
**4-Methylbenzonitrile 2g** 87.9 mg, Oil; IR (film): 3038, 2955, 2925, 2868, 2228, 1919, 1703, 1608, 1509, 1450, 1290, 1177, 1120, 1041, 817, 763, 706, 546 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  7.53 (d,  $J$  = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.27 (d,  $J$  = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 2.42 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  143.7, 132.0, 129.8, 119.1, 109.3, 21.8; MS (EI, 70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 118 [ $M^+ + 1$ ] (11), 117 [ $M^+$ ] (100), 116 (76); Known compound.<sup>1</sup>



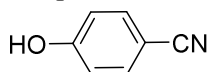
**3-Methylbenzonitrile 2h** 515.7 mg, Oil; IR (film): 2994, 2229, 1770, 1244, 789, 687 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  7.43-7.38 (m, 3H), 7.34 (t,  $J$  = 7.4 Hz, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  139.2, 133.7, 132.4, 129.2, 129.0, 119.0, 112.1, 21.1; MS (EI, 70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 118 [ $M^+ + 1$ ] (12), 117 [ $M^+$ ] (100), 116 (78); Known compound.<sup>1</sup>



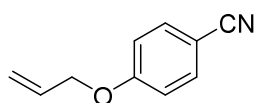
**4-Methoxybenzonitrile 2i** 130.5 mg, Solid, m.p. 56.3-57.2 $^{\circ}\text{C}$  (*lit.* 55-57  $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ); IR (KBr): 3022, 2977, 2943, 2842, 2215, 1604, 1508, 1461, 1305, 830, 547 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  7.57 (d,  $J$  = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 6.95 (d,  $J$  = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 3.86 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  162.8, 133.9, 119.2, 114.8, 103.8, 55.5; MS (EI, 70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 134 [ $M^+ + 1$ ] (9), 133 (100) [ $M^+$ ], 103 (60); Known compound.<sup>1</sup>



**4-Dimethylaminobenzonitrile 2j** 70.2 mg, Solid, m.p. 75.4-76.5 $^{\circ}\text{C}$  (*lit.* 75-76  $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ); IR (KBr): 2908, 2823, 2210, 1607, 1526, 1371, 1226, 818, 545 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  7.44 (d,  $J$  = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 6.63 (d,  $J$  = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 3.03 (s, 6H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  152.5, 133.3, 120.7, 111.4, 97.2, 39.9; MS (EI, 70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 147 (8) [ $M^+ + 1$ ], 146 [ $M^+$ ] (84), 145 (100), 102 (30); Known compound.<sup>3</sup>

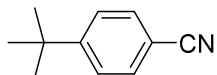


**4-Hydroxybenzonitrile 2k** 83.4 mg, Solid, m.p. 108.3-109.2 $^{\circ}\text{C}$  (*lit.* 107-109  $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ); IR (KBr): 3287, 2233, 1609, 1586, 1441, 1371, 838, 699 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  7.57 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 6.95 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 2H, containing -OH);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  160.3, 134.3, 119.3, 116.5, 102.8; MS (EI, 70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 120 [ $M^+ + 1$ ] (11), 119 [ $M^+$ ] (100), 91 (23); Known compound.<sup>4</sup>

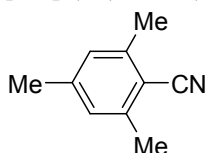


**4-Allyloxybenzonitrile 2l** 143.3 mg, Oil; IR (film): 3082, 2927, 2558, 2224, 1605,

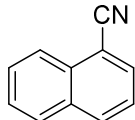
1508, 1303, 1257, 1173, 996, 835 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (600 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  7.56 (d,  $J$  = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 6.96 (d,  $J$  = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 6.05-6.00 (m, 1H), 5.42 (d,  $J$  = 17.4 Hz, 1H), 5.33 (d,  $J$  = 10.8 Hz, 1H), 4.59 (s, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (150 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  161.9, 133.9, 132.1, 119.2, 118.4, 115.5, 104.0, 69.0; MS (EI, 70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 160 [ $\text{M}^+ + 1$ ] (9), 159 [ $\text{M}^+$ ] (72), 41 (100); Known compound.<sup>1</sup>



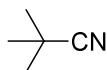
**4-tert-Butylbenzonitrile 2m** 132.1 mg, Oil; IR (film): 2966, 2228, 1606, 1505, 1465, 1366, 1270, 1106, 838 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  7.59 (d,  $J$  = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 7.48 (d,  $J$  = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 1.33 (s, 9H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  156.6, 131.9, 126.2, 119.1, 109.3, 35.2, 30.9; MS (EI, 70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 159 [ $\text{M}^+$ ] (22), 144 (100), 116 (87); Known compound.<sup>5</sup>



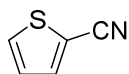
**2,4,6-Trimethylbenzonitrile 2n** 106.0 mg, Solid, m.p. 48.8-49.9 $^{\circ}\text{C}$  (*lit.* 49  $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ); IR (KBr): 2975, 2921, 2857, 2215, 1608, 1471, 862, 583 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  6.92 (s, 2H), 2.47 (s, 6H), 2.32 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  142.8, 141.9, 128.2, 117.6, 110.3, 21.5, 20.6; MS (EI, 70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 145 [ $\text{M}^+$ ] (50), 130 (100); Known compound.<sup>6</sup>



**Naphthalene-1-carbonitrile 2o** 152.1 mg, Oil; IR (film): 3060, 2970, 2221, 1943, 1849, 1699, 1653, 1590, 1508, 1457, 1375, 1341, 1269, 1212, 800, 770, 689, 571, 538 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (600 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  8.19 (d,  $J$  = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 8.02 (d,  $J$  = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 7.86 (t,  $J$  = 10.2 Hz, 2H), 7.64 (s, 1H), 7.58 (s, 1H), 7.47 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (150 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  133.3, 132.9, 132.6, 132.3, 128.7, 128.6, 127.6, 125.1, 124.9, 117.8, 110.2; MS (EI, 70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 154 [ $\text{M}^+ + 1$ ] (19), 153 [ $\text{M}^+$ ] (100), 126 (59); Known compound.<sup>1</sup>



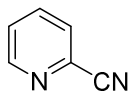
**Pivalonitrile 2p** 24.9 mg, Oil; IR (film): 2987, 2236, 1734, 1652, 1521, 1457, 1066, 668 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (600 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  1.38 (s, 9H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (150 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  125.8, 28.3, 28.0; MS (EI, 70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 84 [ $\text{M}^+ + 1$ ] (3), 42 (100), 41 (87); Known compound.<sup>7</sup>



**Thiophene-2-carbonitrile 2q** 56.8 mg, Oil; IR (film): 3118, 2228, 1608, 1511, 1482, 799, 712 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (600 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  7.61 (s, 2H), 7.12 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (150 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  137.5, 132.9, 127.8, 114.3, 109.7; MS (EI, 70



eV):  $m/z$  (%) 109 [ $M^+$ ] (100); Known compound.<sup>8</sup>



**Picolinonitrile 2r** 82.2 mg, Oil; IR (film): 3059, 2929, 2237, 1699, 1653, 1580, 1459, 1433, 1362, 1290, 992, 781, 737, 551 $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (600 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , TMS, ppm):  $\delta$  8.75 (s, 1H), 7.92 (s, 1H), 7.76 (s, 1H), 7.60 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (150 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm):  $\delta$  151.1, 137.2, 133.9, 128.6, 127.1, 117.2; MS (EI, 70 eV):  $m/z$  (%) 104 (100) [ $M^+$ ], 78 (3); Known compound.<sup>9</sup>

## References

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