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Supplementary Information

Carbazole-Containing Difluoroboron β -Diketonate dyes: two-photon excited

fluorescence in solution and grinding-induced blue-shifted emission in solid state

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Methods and Materials

Unless otherwise noted, all chemical reagents and solvents were commercially available and were used without further purification. ¹H NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker Avance 400 M spectrometer using tetramethyl silane (TMS) as internal standard at room temperature and referenced to the solvent signal. High resolution mass spectrometry (HR-MS) experiments were performed with Thermo Fisher Q-Exactive or Bruker Apex IV FTMS. UV-visible absorption and emission spectra for the solutions were recorded with Hitachi UV-3900 and F-4600 spectrometer, respectively. Fluorescence quantum yields were determined on Edinburgh instruments FLS-980 with an integrating sphere system. The time-resolved fluorescence spectra were recorded by time-correlated single photon counting (Edinburgh instruments FLS-980), and the values of lifetime were analyzed by exponential function fitting with software F900. Fluorescence microscope images were performed on OLYMPUS IXTI. Powder X-ray diffraction (PXRD) patterns were recorded at room temperature with a Shimadzu XRD-7000. DSC analysis was performed in a Mettler Toledo DSC 1 instrument at heating and cooling rates of 10 °C /min under an N₂ atmosphere.



Scheme S1. The synthetic routes of complexes 1-4.

The synthetic routes of complexes 1-4 are shown in Scheme 1. The detailed synthetic routes of compounds **B**, **C**, **E**, **F**, and 4 were referred as literature.^{S1}

Synthesis of **G**: To a three-necked flask was added compound **E** (475 mg, 2.0 mmol) in 5 mL anhydrous THF. The solution was purged with N₂ for 10 min, and then added NaH (57-63% oil dispersion, 1.0 g, 25 mmol). After stirring for 30 min under N₂ at 65 °C, to the reaction mixture was added methyl 4-methoxybenzoate (332 mg, 2.0 mmol). The reaction mixture was stirred for 24 hours at 65 °C under N₂ protection. After cooling to room temperature, the reaction was quenched by addition of water carefully in an ice bath. The pH was adjusted to 3 with HCl (aq). THF phase was separated, and the aqueous suspension was extracted with dichloromethane. The combined organic phase was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄, and concentrated under reduced pressure. The crude product was purified by column chromatography (silica gel, 4:1 v/v, petroleum ether/ethyl acetate) to afford product **G** as orange solid (482 mg, 65%). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 17.38 (s, 1H), 8.77 (s, 1H), 8.18 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 8.02 (d, *J* = 12.0 Hz, 2H), 7.51 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.34 – 7.27 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.03 – 6.97 (d, *J* = 12.0 Hz, 2H), 6.92 (s, 1H), 4.39 (q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 3.89 (s, 3H), 1.46 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H). HR-MS: m/z [M] calculated for C₂₄H₂₁NO₃, 371.1521; found, 371.1517.

Synthesis of **1**: To a solution of compound **G** (370 mg, 1.0 mmol) in 5 mL CH₂Cl₂ was added Et₃N (500 μ L, 3.6 mmol). After stirring for 10 min at room temperature, BF₃/Et₂O (400 μ L, 3.0 mmol) was added. The solution was stirred for another 2 hours in the dark. Water was added to the solution, and the organic layers was collected, washed with saturated NaHCO₃ solution and brine, dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄, and concentrated under reduced pressure. The crude product was purified by column chromatography (silica gel, 1:1 v/v, petroleum ether/dichloromethane) to afford product **1** as yellow solid (350 mg, 83%). ¹H NMR (600 MHz, DMSO-d₆) δ 9.25 (s, 1H), 8.42 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 8.36 – 8.34 (m, 3H), 7.86 (s, 1H), 7.81 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.71 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.54 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.33 (t, *J* = 7.4 Hz, 1H), 7.18 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 4.52 (q, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 2H), 3.90 (s, 3H), 1.34 (t, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 3H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO-d₆) δ 181.7, 179.3, 165.5, 144.4, 141.0, 132.0, 127.7, 127.6, 124.5, 123.9, 123.4, 122.9, 122.2, 121.6, 121.2, 115.3, 110.7, 110.50, 92.9, 56.4, 38.1, 14.3. HR-MS: m/z [M + H] calculated for C₂₄H₂₁BF₂NO₃, 420.1583; found, 420.1585.

Synthesis of **H**: To a three-necked flask was added compound **E** (500 mg, 2.1 mmol) in 5 mL anhydrous THF. The solution was purged with N₂ for 10 min, and then added NaH (57-63% oil dispersion, 0.5 g, 12 mmol). After stirring for 30 min under N₂ at 65 °C, to the reaction mixture was added methyl acetate (0.5 mL, 6.2 mmol). The reaction mixture was stirred for 24 hours at 65 °C under N₂ protection. After cooling to room temperature, the reaction was quenched by addition of water carefully in an ice bath. The pH was adjusted to 3 with HCl (aq). THF phase was separated, and the aqueous suspension was extracted with dichloromethane. The combined organic phase was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄, and concentrated under reduced pressure. The crude product was purified by column chromatography (silica gel, 10:1 v/v, petroleum ether/ethyl acetate) to afford product **H** as yellow oil (310 mg, 54%). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 16.57 (s, 1H), 8.70 (d, *J* = 1.5 Hz, 1H), 8.16 (d, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 8.04 (dd, *J* = 8.7, 1.8 Hz, 1H), 7.52 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.43 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.34 – 7.27 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 6.33 (s, 1H), 4.39 (q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 2.23 (s, 3H), 1.46 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 4H). HR-MS: m/z [M + H] calculated for C₁₈H₁₈NO₂, 280.1338; found, 280.1329.

Synthesis of **2**: To a solution of compound **H** (300 mg, 1.1 mmol) in 5 mL CH₂Cl₂ was added Et₃N (500 μ L, 3.6 mmol). After stirring for 10 min at room temperature, BF₃/Et₂O (400 μ L, 3.0 mmol) was added. The solution was stirred for another 2 hours in the dark. Water was added to the solution, and the organic layers was collected, washed with saturated NaHCO₃ solution and brine, dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄, and concentrated under reduced pressure. The crude product was purified by column chromatography (silica gel, 1:1 v/v, petroleum ether/dichloromethane) to afford product **2** as yellow solid (40 mg, 80%). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.87 (d, *J* = 1.7 Hz, 1H), 8.17 – 8.14 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.59 – 7.53 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.45 (dd, *J* = 11.6, 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.36 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 6.64 (s, 1H), 4.40 (q, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 2.40 (s, 3H), 1.48 (t, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 3H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 188.6, 182.7, 144.4, 140.8, 127.2, 127.1, 123.6, 123.2, 122.9, 121.2, 121.0, 121.0, 109.4, 108.9, 96.5, 38.1, 24.4, 13.9.HR-MS: m/z [M + NH₄] calculated for C₁₈H₂₀BF₂N₂O₂, 345.1586; found, 345.1581.

Synthesis of I: To a solution of **D** (400 mg, 2.1 mmol) in 6 mL 1,2-dichloroethane was added $AlCl_3$ (2.0 g, 15 mmol) and acetyl bromide (500 µL, 6.0 mmol). The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 5 hours, and then poured into 20 mL diluted HCl ice water. The organic phase was collected, dried over anhydrous Na_2SO_4 and concentrated in vacuum. The crude product was purified by column chromatography (silica gel, 1:1 v/v, petroleum ether/dichloromethane) to afford **D** as grey

solid (510 mg, 89%).¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.70 (s, 2H), 8.11 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.41 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 4.39 (q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 2.70 (s, 6H), 1.46 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H). HR-MS: m/z [M] calculated for C₁₈H₁₇NO₂, 279.1259; found, 279.1260.

Synthesis of J: To a three-necked flask was added compound I (560 mg, 2.0 mmol) in 5 mL anhydrous THF. The solution was purged with N₂ for 10 min, and then added NaH (57-63% oil dispersion, 1.0 g, 25 mmol). After stirring for 30 min under N₂ at 65 °C, to the reaction mixture was added methyl acetate (1.0 mL, 12 mmol). The reaction mixture was stirred for 24 hours at 65 °C under N₂ protection. After cooling to room temperature, the reaction was quenched by addition of water carefully in an ice bath. The pH was adjusted to 3 with HCl (aq). THF phase was separated, and the aqueous suspension was extracted with dichloromethane. The combined organic phase was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄, and concentrated under reduced pressure. The crude product was purified by column chromatography (silica gel, 10:1 v/v, petroleum ether/ethyl acetate) to afford product J as green-yellow solid (250 mg, 34%). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 16.49 (s, 2H), 8.73 (s, 1H), 8.09 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 7.46 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 6.34 (s, 2H), 4.43 (q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 4H), 2.24 (s, 6H), 1.48 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 6H). HR-MS: m/z [M + Na] calculated for C₂₂H₂₁NaNO₄, 386.1368; found, 386.1361.

Synthesis of **3**: To a solution of compound **J** (360 mg, 1.0 mmol) in 5 mL CH₂Cl₂ was added Et₃N (1.0 mL, 7.2 mmol). After stirring for 10 min at room temperature, BF₃/Et₂O (800 μ L, 6.0 mmol) was added. The solution was stirred for another 2 hours in the dark. Water was added to the solution, and the organic layers was collected, washed with saturated NaHCO₃ solution and brine, dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄, and concentrated under reduced pressure. The crude product was purified by column chromatography (silica gel, 1:1 v/v, petroleum ether/dichloromethane) to afford product **3** as yellow solid (373 mg, 81%). ¹H NMR (600 MHz, DMSO-d₆) δ 9.24 (s, 2H), 8.29 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.87 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.30 (s, 2H), 4.54 (q, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 2H), 2.43 (s, 3H), 1.34 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, DMSO-d₆) δ 191.6, 181.9, 145.4, 128.5, 124.5, 123.4, 123.0, 111.6, 97.9, 38.6, 24.7, 14.3. HR-MS: m/z [M + NH₄] calculated for C₂₂H₂₃B₂F₄N₂O₄, 477.1780; found, 477.1774.



Fig. S1 The normalized absorption spectra of complexes 1 (a), 2 (b), 3 (c) and 4 (d) in different solvents.



Fig. S2 HOMO/LUMO orbitals of complexes 1-4 based on DFT calculations.

	Solvents	^a λ _{abs} /nm	^b ε/ cm ⁻¹ M ⁻¹	²λ _{em} /nm	${}^{d} \Phi_{f}$	^e τ _f /ns	^{<i>f</i>} k _f / 10 ⁹ S ⁻¹	^g k _{nr} / 10 ⁹ S ⁻¹
	Toluene	440	72000	474	0.93	2.26	0.41	0.03
1	CHCl₃	443	75300	495	0.89	3.00	0.30	0.04
	THF	440	82670	498	0.91	3.48	0.26	0.03
	DCM	445	69300	514	0.84	3.92	0.21	0.04
	Acetone	442	69000	521	0.48	3.07	0.16	0.17
	СН₃ОН	441	53000	530	0.07	0.94	0.07	0.99
	Toluene	402	44000	444	0.87	3.43	0.25	0.04
2	CHCl₃	406	51950	475	0.75	4.83	0.15	0.05
	THF	400	47800	475	0.79	5.36	0.15	0.04
	DCM	406	46000	495	0.70	6.00	0.12	0.05
	Acetone	402	46200	506	0.57	5.80	0.10	0.07
	CH₃OH	401	40400	534	0.05	0.64	0.08	1.48
	Toluene	412	60800	436	0.88	2.00	0.44	0.06
3	CHCl₃	417	67400	443	0.92	2.11	0.44	0.04
	THF	414	61800	450	0.95	2.52	0.38	0.02
	DCM	418	54400	451	0.93	2.50	0.37	0.03
	Acetone	417	59000	460	0.81	3.30	0.25	0.06
	CH₃OH	414	52800	476	0.39	3.48	0.11	0.18
	Toluene	460	75600	481	0.93	1.87	0.50	0.04
4	CHCl₃	466	93600	504	0.89	1.95	0.46	0.06
	THF	460	108200	489	0.93	2.14	0.43	0.03
	DCM	467	101300	513	0.80	2.12	0.38	0.09
	Acetone	464	105600	506	0.81	2.45	0.33	0.08
	CH₃OH	463	39100	525	0.40	1.98	0.20	0.30

 Table S1 The photophysical data of complexes 1-4 in different solvents.



Fig. S3 Photostability of complex 1 (a), 2 (b) and 3 (c) in DCM solution (10 μ M) upon irradiation at λ = 400 nm under xenon lamp.



Fig. S4 The one-photon (black dashed line) and two-photon (red solid line) excited fluorescence spectra of complexes 1(a), 2(b), 3(c) and 4(d) in THF (20 μ M).



Fig. S5 The TPEF spectra and the logarithmic plots of the fluorescence integral of **1**-**4** in THF (0.1 mM) at different excitation intensities (mW) at a wavelength of 780 nm.



Fig. S6 Plots of one-photon absorption vs. wavelength (blue lines, right-hand side and top axes) and two-photon absorption cross-section vs. wavelength (filled squares, left-hand side and bottom axes) for **1-4** in DCM.



Fig. S7 Plots of one-photon absorption vs. wavelength (blue lines, right-hand side and top axes) and two-photon absorption cross-section vs. wavelength (filled squares, left-hand side and bottom axes) for **1-4** in THF.



Fig. S8 Plots of one-photon absorption vs. wavelength (blue lines, right-hand side and top axes) and two-photon absorption cross-section vs. wavelength (filled squares, left-hand side and bottom axes) for **1-4** in toluene.



Fig. S9 TPA spectra of complexes 1-4 in toluene (a), THF (b) and DCM (c).

	1	2	3	
CCDC number	1574740	1574741	1574742	
Empirical formula	$C_{24}H_{20}BNO_3F_2$	$C_{18}H_{16}BNO_2F_2$	$C_{22}H_{19}B_2F_4NO_4$	
Formula weight	419.22	327.13	459.00	
Temperature/K	153.15	153.15	100.01	
Crystal system	Monoclinic	Monoclinic	tetragonal	
Space group	P2 ₁ /n	C2/c	P4 ₂ /n	
	a = 11.151 (2) Å	a = 21.231(4) Å	a = 23.179(3) Å	
Unit cell	b = 13.828 (3) Å	b = 9.2009(18) Å	b = 23.179(3) Å	
dimensions	c = 13.934 (3) Å	c = 16.416(3) Å	c = 7.6814(15) Å	
	α= 90°	α = 90°	α = 90°	
	β = 112.20(3) °	β = 105.76(3)°	β = 90 °	
	γ = 90°	γ = 90°	γ = 90°	
Volume (ų)	1989.2(8)	3086.2(11)	4127.0(11)	
Z	4	8	8	
$\rho_{calc} g/cm^3$	1.400	1.408	1.477	
µ/mm ⁻¹	0.104	0.107	0.123	
F(000)	872.0	1360.0	1888.0	
Radiation	ΜοΚα (λ = 0.71073)	ΜοΚα (λ = 0.71073)	ΜοΚα (λ = 0.71073)	
20 range for data	4.318 to 54.972	5.156 to 54.916	5.86 to 49.98	
collection/°				
Index ranges	-14 ≤ h ≤ 14, -17 ≤ k ≤ 17,	-20 ≤ h ≤ 27, -11 ≤ k ≤ 11, -21 ≤ l ≤	-27 ≤ h ≤ 27, -27 ≤ k ≤ 27, -9 ≤ l	
	-18 ≤ l ≤ 18	21	≤ 9	
Reflections	13400	12172	26668	
collected				
Independent	4488 [R _{int} = 0.0471, R _{sigma} =	3513 [R _{int} = 0.0545, R _{sigma} =	3596 [R _{int} = 0.0748, R _{sigma} =	
reflections	0.0499]	0.0487]	0.0408]	
Goodness-of-fit on	1.238	1.261	1.392	
F ²				
Final R indices	R ₁ = 0.0962, wR2 = 0.1763	R ₁ = 0.0839, wR ₂ = 0.1489	R ₁ = 0.0910, wR ₂ = 0.1412	
[I>2sigma(I)]				
R indices (all data)	R ₁ = 0.1116, wR2 = 0.1853	R ₁ = 0.1001, wR ₂ = 0.1722	R ₁ = 0.0955, wR ₂ = 0.1425	

Table S2 Single crystal data of complexes 1-3.



Fig. S10 The molecular structures of complex 1 viewed along the short and long molecules axis.



Fig. S11 The centroid-centroid (Cg-Cg) distances of two adjacent complex 2.



Fig. S12 Molecular stacking of complex **2** along the *c*-axis direction and the CH^{……}F hydrogen bonding between molecules of adjacent arrays.



Fig. S13 Molecular stacking structures of complex **3** along the *a*-axis (top) and *c*-axis (bottom) directions.



Fig. S14 The molecular stacking structures of complex **3** and the CH—F hydrogen bonding between alternative molecules.

	1	2	3
	λ _{em} = 627 nm	λ_{em} = 566 nm	λ _{em} = 542 nm
pristine	2.1 ns, 21.0%;	3.1 ns, 96.7%;	1.4 ns, 40.34%;
	5.3 ns, 71.0%;	9.0 ns, 3.3%	3.8 ns, 37.5%;
	19.9 ns, 8.0%		16.7 ns, 22.1%
	λ _{em} = 612 nm	λ_{em} = 553 nm	λ _{em} = 499 nm
	2.6 ns, 35.0%;	3.0 ns, 96.0%;	0.5 ns, 40.2%;
Partly	5.7 ns, 54.0%;	8.7 ns, 4.0%	1.4 ns, 41.0%;
ground	17.7 ns, 11.0%		8.5 ns, 18.8 %
	λ _{em} = 557 nm	λ _{em} = 535 nm	λ _{em} = 528 nm
	(shoulder peak)	(shoulder peak)	(shoulder peak)
	0.6 ns, 44.0%;	1.62ns, 62.2%;	1.0 ns, 26.5%;
	1.4 ns, 41.0%;	4.72 ns, 37.8%	2.8 ns, 54.0%;
	6.4 ns, 15.0%		13.1 ns, 19.5%
	λ _{em} = 597 nm	λ_{em} = 535 nm	λ _{em} = 556 nm
Fully	2.9 ns, 15.0%;	1.45 ns, 63.1%	0.7 ns, 19.6%;
ground	10.1 ns, 49.0%;	5.60 ns, 36.9%	1.7 ns, 53.9%;
	24.3 ns, 36.0%		5.0 ns, 26.5%
ground-	λ _{em} = 535 nm	λ_{em} = 518 nm	λ _{em} = 526 nm
heating	0.6 ns, 70.3%;	1.9 ns, 63.0%;	1.5 ns, 50.9%;
	4.2 ns, 29.7%	3.8 ns, 37.0%	4.4 ns, 49.1%

Table S3 The emission wavelength and the corresponding lifetime at different conditions.



Fig. S15 The normalized emission and fluorescence lifetime (monitored at emission maximum) changes of complexes 1(a, b), 2(c, d) and 3(e, f) upon grinding with different time.



Fig. S16 The fluorescence decay profiles of crystal of 1 before and after ground.



Fig. S17 The fluorescence decay profiles of crystal of 2 before and after ground.



Fig. S18 The fluorescence decay profiles of crystal of 3 before and after ground.



Fig. S19 The normalized absorption spectra of complexes 1(a), 2(b) and 3(c) upon grinding of different extent.



Fig. S20 (a) The emission spectra of complex **2** in dilute chloroform solution (5 μ M) and high concentration chloroform solution (20 mM), λ_{ex} = 405 nm. (b) The fluorescence decay profiles of complex **2** in different conditions.



Fig. S21 DSC curves of pristine crystals of 1 (a), 2 (b) and 3 (c).



Fig. S22 Normalized emission spectra of 1 (a), 2 (b) and 3 (c) in pristine crystal and treatment with heating and DCM vapour.



Fig. S23 The XRD patterns of complex **1** (a), **2** (b) and **3** (c) in pristine crystal and after grinding-heating process.



Fig. S25 The HR-MS spectrum of compound G.



Fig. S27 The HR-MS spectrum of compound H.





Fig.29 The HR-MS spectrum of compound I





Fig. S31 The HR-MS spectrum of compound J.



Fig. S33 The ¹³C NMR spectrum of complex 1 in DMSO-d₆.













Fig. S39 The 13 C NMR spectrum of complex 3 in DMSO-d₆.



Fig. S40 The HR-MS spectrum of complex 3.

Reference

S1 P.-Z. Chen, Y.-X. Weng, L.-Y. Niu, Y.-Z. Chen, L.-Z. Wu, C.-H. Tung, Q.-Z. Yang, Angew. Chem. Int. Ed., 2016, 55, 2759.