

Supporting Information

A General and Convenient Catalytic Synthesis of Nitriles from Amides and Silanes

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General information: Unless otherwise stated, reactions were run under an argon atmosphere with exclusion of moisture from reagents and glassware using standard techniques for manipulating air-senstive compounds. Toluene, 1,4-dioxane and dibutylether were distilled from sodium. NMR spectra were recorded on Bruker AV 300 (^1H and ^{13}C) and AV 400 (^{29}Si) spectrometers at 300 MHz (^1H), 75 MHz (^{13}C) and 79.5 MHz (^{29}Si). All chemical shift (δ) are reported in ppm and coupling constants (J) in Hz; All chemical shifts are relative to tetramethylsilane; the resonance of the residual protons of the solvent was used as the internal standard (7.26 ppm, chloroform; 2.20 ppm, o-xylene) and all *d*-solvent peaks (77.00 ppm, chloroform; 19.60 ppm, o-xylene), respectively. All measurements were carried out at room temperature unless otherwise stated. Mass spectra were in general recorded on an AMD

402/3 or a HP 5989A mass selective detector. Gas chromatography was performed on a HP 6890 chromatography with a HP5 column.

Reagents: $[\text{Et}_3\text{NH}][\text{HFe}_3(\text{CO})_{11}]$ ¹ was prepared by the method reported previously. All other chemicals were obtained commercially and were used as received.

General procedure for the dehydration of primary amides to nitriles: A 25 mL oven dried schlenk tube containing a stir bar was charged with primary amides (1.0 mmol), and $[\text{Et}_3\text{NH}][\text{HFe}_3(\text{CO})_{11}]$ (0.02-0.05 mmol). $(\text{EtO})_2\text{MeSiH}$ (3.0 mmol; for amide **1k** and **1m**, 4.0 mmol) and dry toluene or 1,4-dioxane (2mL) were added respectively after purging the schlenk tube with argon. The mixture was stirred for the time indicated in table 3 at 100°C. The cooled reaction mixture was diluted with diethyl ether (5 mL) and quenched by addition of 2M HCl (5 mL). The reaction mixture was vigorously stirred for 3h at room temperature and was then extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 20 mL) (for amide **1k**, about 5 M NaOH (2 mL) was used to adjust the PH value to 7 before extracting). The combined organic layers were washed with brine (10 mL), dried over anhydrous Na_2SO_4 , filtered and concentrated under reduced pressure (900 mbar, 40°C). the residue was Purified by silica gel column chromatography and gave the corresponding nitriles.

4-Methylbenzonitrile (2b**):** ^1H NMR (300.1 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 2.26$ (s, 3 H), 7.10 (d, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 2 H), 7.37 (d, $J = 8.3$ Hz, 2 H); ^{13}C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 21.75, 109.22, 119.07, 129.76, 131.96, 143.63$. MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 118 (11), 117 (100), 116 (74), 91 (7), 90 (44), 89 (30), 64 (6), 63 (13), 62 (6), 51 (5), 50 (5), 39 (7).

3-Methylbenzonitrile (2c**):** ^1H NMR (300.1 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 2.38$ (s, 3 H), 7.08-7.44 (m, 4 H); ^{13}C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 20.36, 112.66, 118.04, 126.13, 130.14, 132.40, 133.56, 141.83$. MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 118 (16), 117 (98), 116 (100), 91 (10), 90 (67), 89 (47), 76 (6), 75 (7), 63 (22), 62 (10), 51 (9), 50 (9), 39 (15), 38 (6). HRMS (EI, m/z) calcd. for $\text{C}_8\text{H}_7\text{N}$, 117.0573; found 117.0571.

2-Methylbenzonitrile (2d**):** ^1H NMR (300.1 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 2.37$ (s, 3 H), 7.31-7.46 (m, 4H); ^{13}C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 21.04, 112.14, 118.94, 128.90, 129.17, 132.38, 132.56, 139.13$. MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 118 (12), 117 (100), 116 (66), 91 (7), 90 (54), 89 (36), 64 (6), 63 (14), 51 (6), 50 (6).

4-Methoxylbenzonitrile (2e): ^1H NMR (300.1 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 3.85 (s, 3 H), 6.92-6.97 (m, 2 H), 7.55-7.60 (m, 2 H); ^{13}C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 55.48, 103.88, 114.69, 119.17, 133.91, 162.78. MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 134 (9), 133 (100), 118 (10), 104 (11), 103 (38), 102 (9), 90 (45), 76 (10), 75 (7), 64 (12), 63 (14), 62 (5) 39 (7).

4-tert-Butylbenzonitrile (2f): ^1H NMR (300.1 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 1.32 (s, 9 H), 7.56-7.57 (m, 2 H), 7.59-7.60 (m, 2 H); ^{13}C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 30.86, 35.18, 109.23, 119.08, 126.10, 131.88, 156.56. MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 159 (19), 145 (12), 144 (100), 128 (59, 117 (7), 116 (59), 115 (5), 104 (12), 89 (7), 77 (5), 51 (4), 39 (6). HRMS (EI, m/z) calcd. for $\text{C}_{11}\text{H}_{13}\text{N}$, 159.1043; found 159.1045.

4-Chlorobenzonitrile (2g): ^1H NMR (300.1 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 7.26-7.48 (m, 2 H), 7.58-7.62 (m, 2 H); ^{13}C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 110.74, 117.92, 129.65, 133.33, 139.50. MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 139 (34), 138 (8), 137 (100), 102 (30), 75 (14), 74 (79, 73 (4), 51 (6), 50 (11).

4-Bromobenzonitrile (2h): ^1H NMR (300.1 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 7.34-7.39 (m, 2 H), 7.46-8.31 (m, 2 H); ^{13}C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 111.20, 118.00, 127.97, 132.61, 133.37. MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 182 (98), 180 (100), 103 (8), 102 (93), 76 (12), 75 (26), 74 (10), 51 (13), 50 (17).

1-Cyanonaphthalene (2i): ^1H NMR (300.1 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 7.52 (dd, J = 8.4 Hz, J = 7.4 Hz, 1 H), 7.60-7.72 (m, 2 H), 7.90-7.94 (m, 2 H), 8.08 (d, J = 7.4 Hz, 1 H), 8.22-8.25 (m, 1 H); ^{13}C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 110.15, 117.78, 124.89, 124.91, 125.10, 127.51, 128.55, 128.61, 132.32, 132.59, 132.88, 133.23. MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 154 (13), 153 (100), 152 (6), 127 (5), 126 (18), 76 (7), 75 (5), 63 (9).

2-Cyanonaphthalene (2j): ^1H NMR (300.1 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 7.45-7.56 (m, 3 H), 7.84-7.90 (m, 4 H); ^{13}C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 109.31, 114.43, 122.33, 125.24, 125.69, 127.83, 134.94, 137.39, 141.24. MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 154 (13), 153 (100), 152 (7), 127 (6), 126 (18), 76 (6), 63 (9).

4-Aminobenzonitrile (2k): ^1H NMR (300.1 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 4.20 (bs, 2 H), 6.61-6.66 (m, 2 H), 7.37-7.42 (m, 2 H); ^{13}C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 99.98, 114.36, 120.13, 133.72, 150.42. MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 119 (9), 118 (100), 117 (6), 91 (30), 90 (9), 64 (11), 63 (9), 52 (5). HRMS (ESI, m/z) [M-H] $^-$, calcd. for $\text{C}_7\text{H}_5\text{N}_2$, 117.0458; found 117.0459.

Methyl 4-cyanobenzoate (2l): ^1H NMR (300.1 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 3.95 (s, 3 H), 7.72-7.76 (m, 2 H), 8.11-8.15 (m, 2 H); ^{13}C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 52.69, 116.36, 117.92, 130.06, 132.19, 133.89, 165.38. HRMS (ESI, m/z) [M+H] $^+$, calcd. for $\text{C}_9\text{H}_8\text{O}_2\text{N}$, 161.0471; found 161.07107.

Cinnamonnitrile (2m) and 3-Phenylpropionitrile (2m'): ^1H NMR (300.1 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 2.52 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 2 H), 2.86 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 2 H), 5.36 (d, J = 12.2 Hz, 0.47 H), 5.76-7.39 (m, 8H); ^{13}C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 19.24, 31.46, 94.99, 96.25, 118.08, 119.07, 128.18, 128.78, 128.85, 128.93, 129.03, 130.89, 131.13, 133.43, 137.98, 148.64, 150.50. cinnamonitrile (2m) MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 130 (11), 129 (100), 128 (27), 103 (14), 102 (32), 78 (8), 77 (7), 76 (9), 75 (7), 74 (4), 63 (6), 51 (10); HRMS (EI, m/z) [M], calcd. for $\text{C}_9\text{H}_7\text{N}$, 129.0573; found 129.0576. **3-phenylpropionitrile (2m')** MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 131 (25), 92 (8), 91 (100), 77 (4), 65 (11), 63 (4), 51 (6), 39 (5). HRMS (EI, m/z) [M], calcd. for $\text{C}_9\text{H}_9\text{N}$, 131.0729; found 131.0733.

Benzo[b]thiophene-carbonitrile (2n): ^1H NMR (300.1 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 7.45-7.56 (m, 2 H), 7.85-7.90 (m, 3 H); ^{13}C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 109.61, 114.42, 122.33, 125.23, 125.68, 127.83, 134.94, 137.38, 141.22. MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 161 (5), 160 (11), 159 (100), 133 (2), 132 (5), 115 (5), 114 (4), 79 (2), 69 (5), 63 (3). HRMS (EI, m/z) calcd. for $\text{C}_9\text{H}_5\text{NS}$, 159.0137; found 159.0140.

Benzyl nitrile (2p): ^1H NMR (300.1 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 3.76 (s, 2 H), 7.30-7.42 (m, 5 H); ^{13}C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 23.50, 117.80, 127.84, 127.97, 129.06, 129.85. MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 118 (16), 117 (100), 116 (76), 77 (11), 74 (5), 65 (8), 64 (7), 63 (21), 62 (10), 61 (5), 51 (20), 50 (15), 39 (13), 38 (6). HRMS (EI, m/z) calcd. for $\text{C}_8\text{H}_7\text{N}$, 117.0573; found 117.0571.

Decanonitrile (2q): ^1H NMR (300.1 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 0.86 (t, J = 6.5 Hz, 3 H), 1.20-1.31 (m, 10 H), 1.38-1.47 (m, 2 H), 1.59-1.69 (m, 2 H), 2.32 (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 2 H); ^{13}C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 13.98, 17.02, 22.55, 25.29, 28.57, 28.67, 29.07, 29.17, 31.71, 119.77. MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 152 (3), 138 (6), 125 (5), 124 (36), 111 (21), 110 (83), 98 (8), 97 (75), 96 (100), 93 (5), 84 (11), 83 (69), 82 (96), 81 (8), 71 (12), 70 (18), 69 (62), 68 (13), 67 (8), 57 (37), 56 (19), 55 (50), 54 (49), 53 (9), 43 (47), 42 (17), 41 (80), 40 (57), 39 (25), 29 (26), 28 (8), 27 (20).

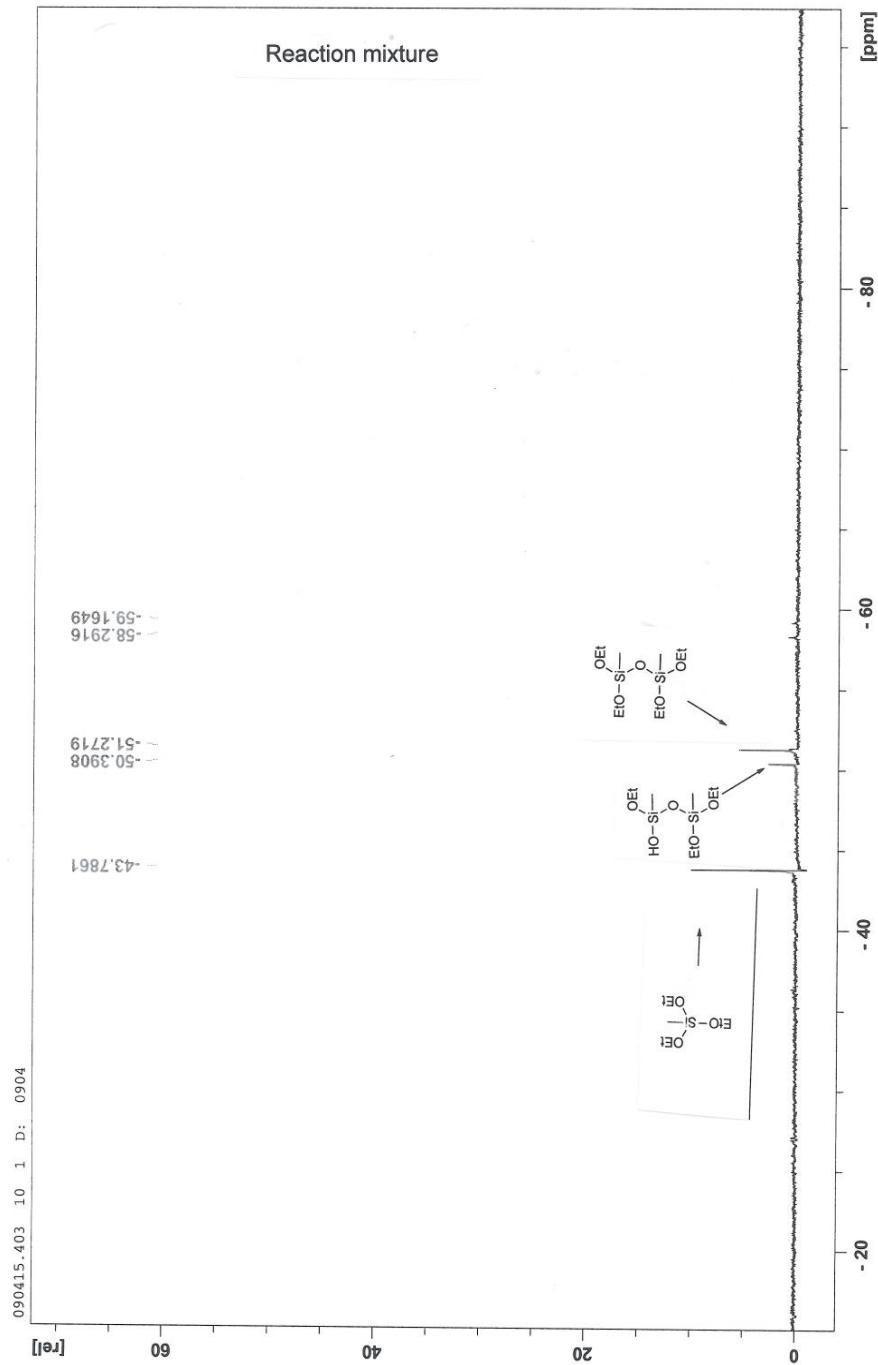
Adamantanecarbonitrile (2r): ^1H NMR (300.1 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 1.72 (bs, 6 H), 2.03 (bs, 9 H); ^{13}C NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 27.04, 30.14, 35.70, 39.86, 125.22. MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 161 (33), 160 (12), 131 (11), 130 (100), 103 (4), 102 (48), 76 (9), 75 (14), 51 (7), 50 (7). HRMS (EI, m/z) [M], calcd. for $\text{C}_{11}\text{H}_{15}\text{N}$, 161.1199; found 161.1206.

Reaction of 1a with $(\text{EtO})_2\text{MeSiH}$ in o-xylene-d₁₀ in the presence of $[\text{Et}_3\text{NH}][\text{HFe}_3(\text{CO})_{11}]$

A 10 mL oven dried schlenk tube containing a stir bar was charged with benzamide (121 mg, 1.0 mmol), and $[\text{Et}_3\text{NH}][\text{HFe}_3(\text{CO})_{11}]$ (11.6 mg, 0.02 mmol). $(\text{EtO})_2\text{MeSiH}$ (0.48 mL, 3.0 mmol), o-xylene-d₁₀ (2 mL) and mesitylene (0.5 mmol, as an internal standard) were added respectively after purging the schlenk tube with argon. The mixture was stirred for 3h at 100 °C. The cooled reaction mixture was directly measured by ^{29}Si NMR and GC-MS. ^{29}Si NMR (79.5 MHz, $[\text{D}_{10}]\text{o-xylene}$) δ = -43.8, -50.4, -51.3; MS [m/z, 267 (M-15), 237 (M-45)].

References

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