# The Raman and Infra-red Studies of Polycrystalline Potassium dicyanocuprate at Room and Low Temperature.

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Summary: The infra-red and Raman spectra of  $KCu(CN)_2$  have been assigned in terms of the known structure. There are no coincidences, and in the CuC stretching and CuCN bending regions there is evidence of factor group splittings at room temperature. On cooling the solid to  $15^{\circ}$ K there is no evidence of a phase change, but there is significant increase in the signal-to-noise ratio which allows confirmation of the assignments made from room temperature data. Assignments were made for the four components of eight out of the ten fundamentals. No assignments were possible for  $\nu_4$ , the totally symmetric CCuC bending vibration and  $\nu_{10}$ , the interionic CuN stretching vibration.

#### Introduction

Over 50 years ago, Bassett and Corbet<sup>1</sup> made a phase rule study of the system CuCN-KCN-H<sub>2</sub>O at 298° K and reported solid phases, KCu(CN)<sub>2</sub>, KCu<sub>2</sub>(CN)<sub>3</sub>. H<sub>2</sub>O, K<sub>3</sub>Cu(CN)<sub>4</sub>. H<sub>2</sub>O. More recent investigations<sup>2 3 4</sup> however, indicated that the last compound is not hydrated.

Much of the early work on the  $Cu(CN)_{\overline{2}}$  ion in aqueous solution has proved to be either inconclusive or incorrect. One of the difficulties encountered was that of measuring the e.m.f of a copper or copper amalgam electrode against a high pH solution containing Cu(I) and an alkali metal cyanide. For example, Penneman and Jones<sup>5</sup> have calculated from the early electro-chemical work of Spitzer<sup>6</sup> values for the  $Cu(CN)_{\overline{2}}$  stability constant ranging from  $\sim 5 \times 10^{-24}$  to  $\sim 10^{-16}$  as the Cu(I) concentration is reduced from 0.1M to 0.00025 M. It has proved difficult to obtain the wavenumber of the symmetric and antisymmetric CN stretching vibrations in aqueous solution.

Penneman and Jones<sup>5</sup> in an infra-red spectroscopic study of the systems CuCN-KCN- $H_2O$  and NaCN-CuCN- $HNO_3$ - $H_2O$ , have argued that in solution having  $[CN^-]/[Cu(I)] \le 3.00$ , there is an appreciable amount of  $Cu(CN)_2^-$  but that its detection is difficult because of the low value of the absorption coefficient of the antisymmetric CN stretching vibration. In the KCN system they were unable to detect the anti-symmetric CN stretching vibration even at the minimum  $[CN^-]/[Cu(I)] = 2.8$  and for [Cu(I)] = 0.200 and a path length

of 20-34 µm. Only the antisymmetric CN stretching vibration of the Cu (CN)<sub>3</sub><sup>2</sup> ion was observed at 2094 cm<sup>-1</sup>. When the [CN<sup>-</sup>]/[Cu(I)] ratio was increased to 3.5 by increasing [CN-], the only changes observed were that the intensity of the band at 2094 cm<sup>-1</sup> decreased a new band at 2076 cm<sup>-1</sup> appeared and increased in intensity so that at  $[CN^{-}]/[Cu(I)] = 35$  it was more intense than that at 2094 cm-1. The band at 2076 cm<sup>-1</sup> is attributed to the antisymmetric CN stretching vibration ( $f_2$ ) of the tetrahedral  $Cu(CN)_4^3$ —ion. In the NaCN system, Penneman and Jones<sup>5</sup> observed a broad band at 2125 cm<sup>-1</sup> for  $[CN^{-}]/[Cu(I)] = 2.56$ , Cu(I) = 0.063 and  $HNO_3 = 0.06$ . They attributed this band to Cu(CN) ion and by implication assigned it the antisymmetric stretching vibration of a presumably linear Cu(CN) ion.

Two years later, Cromer<sup>7</sup> reported the structure of  $KCu(CN)_2$ . Remarkably,  $KCu(CN)_2$  did not contain the expected discrete linear  $Cu(CN)_2^-$  ions but polymeric ions  $[Cu(CN)_2^-]$  in the form of helical chains in which the individual  $[Cu(CN)_2^-]$  ions were bent with C Cu  $C = 134 \pm 1^\circ$ . Each Cu(I) is three-coordinated, being surrounded by a C atom of an unshared  $CN^-$  ion and a C atom and a N atom of shared  $CN^-$  ions. The two CuC bond lengths are  $1.92 \pm 0.02$  A° and the CuN bond length is  $2.05 \pm 0.02$  A°. The CN bond lengths are  $1.15 \pm 0.03$  A° (protruding) and  $1.13 \pm 0.03$  A° (in the chains). The CuCN angles are in the range  $175 \pm 3^\circ$ ,  $CuNC = 139 \pm 2^\circ$ . The copper atom and the three

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light atoms bonded to it are approximately coplanar; there is a relatively short "non-bonded" Cu-Cu distance of 2.84  $A^O$  between adjacent chains. The space group of the unit cell is  $P2_1/C$  ( $C^5_{2h}$ ) and there are four formula units per primitive unit cell. The site symmetry of all the atoms is  $C_1$ .

This paper presents the spectroscopic studies of KCu(CN)<sub>2</sub> at room and low temperature. The Raman vibrational spectroscopic studies at low temperature has not been investigated, and does not appear to have been published yet.

#### Experimental

Preparation of Potassium Dicyanocuprate KCu(CN)<sub>2</sub>.

 $KCN + CuCN.\frac{1}{2}H_2O = KCu(CN)_2$ .

KCN (B.D.H. AnalaR; 20g) was dissolved in minimum amount of  $\rm H_2O$  (40 ml), this solution was further diluted by adding 100 ml, of  $\rm H_2O$ . CuCN.  $\rm \frac{1}{2}H_2O$  (B.D.H. 26g) was gradually added along with constant stirring. The mixture was heated to boiling. When the volume of the solution was reduced to 30 ml, it was cooled in ice. The white crystals produced were filtered at the water pump, followed by washings of ethanol and ether. The yield was 19.8g i.e. 62% based on CuCN.

#### Infrared Spectroscopy

The infrared spectra (4000-250 cm<sup>-1</sup>) which are presented in Figs 1 and 2 were obtained as njuol mulls between KBr and CsI plates using Perkin-Elmer 475 and 521 spectrophotometers. The latter PE 521 was calibrated with water vapour. The observed corrected wavenumbers are listed in Table-1.

## Raman Spectroscopy.

The Raman spectra reported in this paper were obtained using a spex 1401/II double monochromator, an E.M.I 4789/Q/A photomultiplier, a photon counter and an Oxford Instrument series 3000 recorder.

The Raman spectra of polycrystalline KCu(CN)<sub>2</sub> at room temperature was recorded using 488.0 nm exciting radiation from a Spectra Physics argon ion laser (1200 mW and 600 mW ex-laser) and a spectra slit width

of 1 cm<sup>-1</sup>. The maximum uncertainty of the Raman wavenumber reported in the Table-3 is + 1 cm<sup>-1</sup>.

The Raman spectra of poylcrystalline KCu (CN)<sub>2</sub> at 15K were also obtained with 488.0 nm (500 mW ex laser). The sample was cooled by using an Air Products Displex CS-202 closed cycle helium gas refrigerator. The solid was held between two glass plates mounted in a 19 mm diameter holder made of nickel plates copper. Indium gaskets were used to ensure reasonable thermal contact between holder and glass plates. The sample holder was screwed into the cold tip of the Displex refrigerator. An indium gasket between the cold tip and the sample holder ensured good thermal

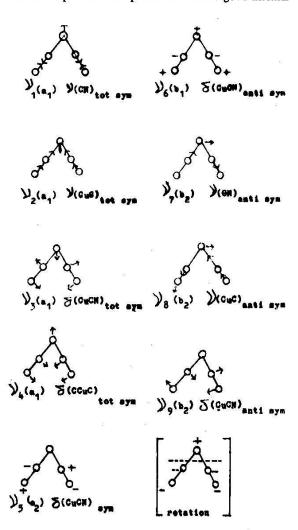


Fig. 1: Normal modes of vibration of a C<sub>2</sub> Cu(CN)<sub>2</sub><sup>-1</sup> ion.

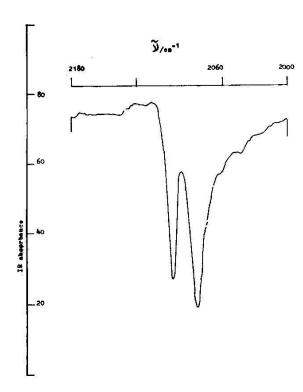


Fig. 2: Infra-red spectrum of polycrystalline KCu(CN)<sub>2</sub> at room temperature in the CN stretching region.

contact. The temperature of the cold tip was measured with a hydrogen vapour bulb thermometer and also with a chromel vs gold with 0.07 atomic % iron thermocouple used in conjunction with a Doric digital temperature readout device. The sample holder was maintained in a vacuum of  $10^{-6}$  torr<sup>7</sup>.8.

## Results and Discussion

The vibrational spectra of solid KCu(CN)2.

## a) The predicted spectrum.

A centrosymmetric linear isolated  $Cu(CN)_2^-$  ion has D  $\alpha$  h symmetry and would have ten degrees of vibrational freedom and seven vibrational wavenumbers (see Table 1) of which three are Raman-active and the remaining four are infra-red active.

$$\Gamma \text{vib} = 20\frac{1}{9} + 2\sigma_{\text{u}}^{+} + \pi \text{g} + 2\pi \text{u}$$

A bent  $C_{2V}$  isolated  $Cu(CN)_{2}^{-}$  ion would have nine degrees of vibrational freedom and nine vibrational wavenumbers (Table 2 and Figure 1).

$$\Gamma \text{vib} = 4a_1 + a_2 + b_1 + 3b_2$$

Table-1 Dah to  $C_{2V}$  correlation for the  $Cu(CN)_{2}^{-}$  ion.

Fundamental	Approximate Description	Symmetry species	Symmetry Species	Approximate Description	Symmetry species.
$\nu_1$	ν(CN) <sub>tot sym</sub>	σ <del>+</del>	→ a <sub>1</sub>	ν(CN) <sub>tot sym</sub>	$\nu_1$
$\nu_2$	ν(CuC) <sub>tot sym</sub>	σ <del>†</del>	→ <sup>2</sup> 1	v(CuC) <sub>tot sym</sub>	$\nu_2$
$\nu_3$	ν(CN) <sub>tot sym</sub>	$\sigma_{\mathbf{u}_{\cdot}}^{+}$	71 <sup>a1</sup>	δ (CuCN) <sub>to sym</sub>	$\nu_3$
$\nu_4$	ν(CuC) <sub>anti sym</sub>	σ <sup>+</sup> <sub>u</sub>	71 <sup>21</sup>	$\delta(CCuC)_{tot\ sym}$	$\nu_4$
$\nu_5$	$\delta \left( \text{CuCN} \right)_{\text{sym}}$	πg	a <sub>2</sub>	$\delta(\text{CuCN})_{\text{sym}}$	$\nu_{5}$
$\nu_6$	δ(CuCN) <sub>anti sym</sub>	π u	<b>→</b> b1	δ(CuCN) <sub>anti</sub> sym	$\nu_6$
ν <sub>7</sub>	δ(CCuC) <sub>anti sym</sub>	πυ	b <sub>2</sub>	ν (CN) <sub>anti sym</sub>	$\nu_7$
			Lybr.	ν (CuC) <sub>anti sym</sub>	$\nu_8$
			b <sub>2</sub>	$\rightarrow \delta (CuCN)_{anti sym}$	$\nu_9$

All nine modes are Raman-active i.e. two CN stretching vibrations  $(\nu_1, \nu_7)$ , two CuC stretching vibrations  $(\nu_2, \nu_8)$ , four CuCN bending vibrations  $(\nu_3, \nu_5, \nu_6, \nu_9)$  and one C Cu C bending vibration  $(\nu_4)$ . Relative to the D<sub>ooh</sub> Cu(CN) $^-_2$  ion, the Ramanactive CuCN bending vibration splits into  $\nu_5(a_2)$  and  $\nu_9(b_2)$ , the two infra-red-active stretching vibrations become Ramanactive, the infra-red-active CuCN bending vibration splits into  $\nu_3(a_1)$  and  $\nu_6(b_1)$  and the doubly degenerate, infra-red active C Cu C bending vibration becomes the non-degenerate  $\nu_4(a_1)$  (Table 1). One CN stretching one CuC stretching one CuCN bending, and one C Cu C stretching vibration will be polarised.

For the  $C_{2V}$  isolated  $Cu(CN)_2^-$  ion eight of the nine modes are infra-red-active as one of the four CuCN bending vibrations  $\nu_5(a_2)$  is infra-red-inactive. Relative to the  $D_{coh}$   $Cu(CN)_2^-$  ion, the infra-red-active CuCN bending vibration splits into  $\nu_3(a_1)$  and  $\nu_6(b_1)$ , the infra-red-active doubly degenerate C Cu C bending vibrations become the non-degenerate  $\nu_4(a_1)$ , the two Raman-active stretching vibrations become infra-red active, the doubly degenerate Raman active CuCN bending vibration becomes the non-degenerate  $\nu_9(b_2)$  (Table 2).

The isolated ion group to site group to unit cell group correlation for the internal modes is given in (Table 2). The precise details of the structure adopted by K  $[Cu(CN)_2]$  are unusual in that none of the atoms occupies a special position. Consequently, in the site group approximation there are nine coincidences. In other words,  $\nu_5(a_2)$  becomes infra-red active.

In the unit cell group approximation each of the nine modes split into a quartet which consists of two sets of non-coincident doublets, one set which is Ramanactive and the other infra-red-active.

## b) The Raman and Infrared results.

The Raman and infra-red results (Table 3 Fig 2 to 7), are significant for several reasons. First, seven fundamentals are expected in this region of the Raman spectrum, two CuC stretching and four CuCN bending vibrations (see table 1) and one interionic CuN stretching vibration. Secondly, only four bands of similar intensity are obtained in the corresponding region of the infrared spectrum (Fig. 3). Thirdly, it is tempting to attribute each of the six Raman bands to the six  $a_g$  factor

group components of each fundamental and the six Raman shoulders or incompletely resolved bands to the corresponding six b<sub>g</sub> components e.g. the band at 279 cm<sup>-1</sup> and the incompletely resolved band at 272 cm<sup>-1</sup> would be the a<sub>g</sub> and b<sub>g</sub> components respectively of one of the three CuCN bending vibrations or the CuN stretching vibration. If this interpretation is correct, then this region of the vibrational spectra of KCu(CN)<sub>2</sub> provides definite evidence of factor group doublets which were both based on the isolated ion of C<sub>2V</sub> symmetry.

Table-2 Isolated ion group to site group to unit cell group for the internal modes of  $Cu(CN)^{-2}_{2}$  in  $KCu(CN)^{-2}_{2}$ .

Isolated Ion	Site	Unit Cell		
$C_{2V}$	$C_1$			
$v_1, a_1$	a	$a_g + b_g$		
		$a_u + b_u$		
$\nu_2$ , $a_1$	a	a <sub>g</sub> + b <sub>u</sub>		
		$a_u + b_u$		
$\nu_3, a_1$	a	$a_g + b_g$		
		a <sub>u</sub> + b <sub>u</sub>		
$v_4, a_1$	а	$a_g + b_g$		
		a <sub>u</sub> + b <sub>u</sub>		
$\nu_5, a_2$	a	ag + bg		
		$a_u + b_u$		
$v_6, b_1$	a	$a_g + b_g$		
0		$a_u + b_u$		
$\nu_7, b_2$	a	$a_g + b_g$		
		a <sub>u</sub> + b <sub>u</sub>		
$\nu_8, b_2$	a	$a_g + b_g$		
		$a_u + b_u$		
$\nu_9$ , $b_2$	a	$a_g + b_g$		
		a <sub>u</sub> + b <sub>u</sub>		

Table 3. Raman and infra-red spectra and assignments for  $Cu(CN)_2^-$  ion in solid  $KCu(CN)_2$ 

Mode	Approximate		Wavenumber/cm <sup>-1</sup>		
		Symmetry species	Raman		Infra-red
	Description		(a)	(b)	33 - 32
<b>V</b> 1	ν (CN) <sub>tot sym</sub>	<sup>2</sup> 1	2113(vs)	2115(vs) 2114 (sh)	2109.5(s)
ν 2	ν (CuC) <sub>tot sym</sub>	. <sup>a</sup> 1	432(w) 426 (s)	438(m) 429 (m)	420(w) 419 (vs)
<i>V</i> 3	δ (CuCN) <sub>tot sym</sub>	a <sub>1</sub>	345(m) 337(sh)	348(m) 338(vw)	342.5(m) 331.5(w)
ν 4	δ (CCuC) <sub>tot sym</sub>	a		-	-
ν 5	δ (CuCN) <sub>sym</sub>	a - 2	357.5(w)	363(m) 358(vw)	Inactive
ν 6	δ (CuCN) <sub>anti sym</sub>	b <sub>i</sub>	279(s) 272(sh)	280(m) 265(w)	286(sh)
ד ע	ν (CN) <sub>anti sym</sub>	$\mathfrak{b}_2$	2091(vs)	2090(vs) 2089(s)	2088(vs)
<i>v</i> 8	ν (CuC)anti sym	b <sub>2</sub>	388(m) 373(sh)	389(s) 382(vw)	377.5(s)
V 9	δ (CuCN) <sub>anti sym</sub>	$\boldsymbol{b_2}$	315(m) 291(sh)	315(m) 296(w)	305(s)

<sup>(</sup>a) Recorded by the present author at room temperature.

In order to obtain confirmatory evidence of these factor group splitting and also to obtain corroborative evidence that each of the two CN stretching bands was, in fact, a doublet, the Raman spectrum of solid KCu(CN)<sub>2</sub> at 15 K was obtained with 1200 mW ex laser (Table 3 and Fig 4 to 7). The results are in striking agreement with expectations.

Each fundamental will now be taken in turn in order of decreasing wavenumber, an assignment proposed, and the importance of the Raman spectrum emphasised. In every case the assignment of the  $a_g$  vibration and the  $b_u$  vibration is made to the more intense of the pair of components. All the assignments are summarised in Table 3.

<sup>(</sup>b) Recorded by the present author at 15 K.

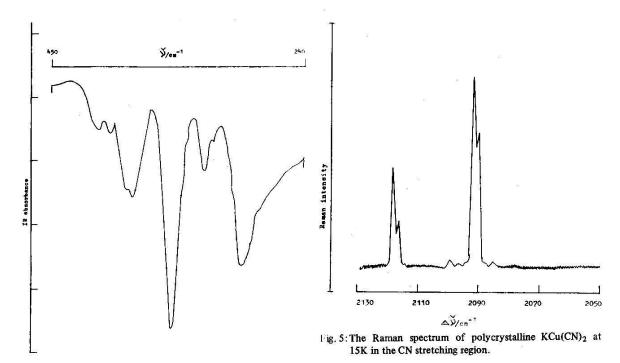


Fig. 3: Infra-red Spectra of polycrystalline (KCu(CN)<sub>2</sub> at room temperature in the 450-240 cm<sup>-1</sup> region.

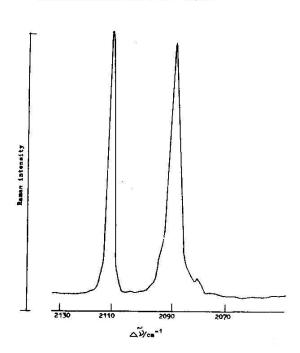


Fig. 4: Raman spectrum of polycrystalline KCu(CN)<sub>2</sub> at room temperature in the CN stretching region.

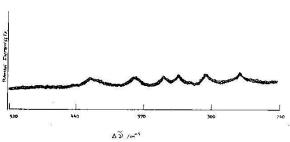


Fig. 6:The Raman spectrum of polycrystalline KCu(CN)<sub>2</sub> at room temperature in the 42-250 cm<sup>-1</sup> region.

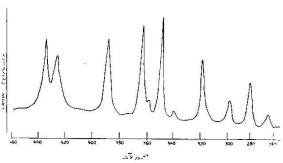


Fig. 7: Raman spectrum of polycrystalline KCu(CN)<sub>2</sub> at 15 k in the (460260) cm<sup>-1</sup> region.

i.  $v_1$  the fotally symmetric CN stretching vibration (or the CN stretching vibration of the CN group associated with the K ions.

The higher wavenumber CN stretching bands are taken to be the totally symmetric CN stretching vibration because there is no established example of  $\widetilde{\nu}$  (CN) anti sym $\widetilde{\nu}$ (CN) tot sym: The  $a_u$  and  $b_u$  components are unseparated at room temperature in the infra-red spectrum at 2109.5 cm $^{-1}$ . The  $a_g$  and  $b_g$  components at 2113 cm $^{-1}$  in the Raman spectrum at room temperature increased in wavenumber slightly and separate to 2115 cm $^{-1}$  and 2114 cm $^{-1}$  on cooling to 15 K.

ii.  $v_7$ , the anti-symmetric CN stretching vibration, (or the CN stretching vibration of CN group associated with the  $Cu^1$  atom).

The  $a_u$  and  $b_u$  components are unseparated at room temperature in the infra-red spectrum at 2088 cm<sup>-1</sup>. The  $a_g$  and  $b_g$  components at 2091 cm<sup>-1</sup> in the Raman spectrum at room temperature decrease slightly in wavenumber and separate to 2090 and 2089 cm<sup>-1</sup> on cooling to 15 K.

iii. v2, the totally symmetric CuC stretching vibration.

The higher wavenumber CuC stretching bands are taken to be the totally symmetric CuC stretching vibration because the higher wavenumber band is weaker than the lower wavenumber band in the infra-red. The a<sub>u</sub> and b<sub>u</sub> components are separated at room temperature in the infra-red spectrum at 420 cm<sup>-1</sup> and 415 cm<sup>-1</sup> respectively. The b<sub>g</sub> and a<sub>g</sub> components which are separated at room temperature in the Raman spectrum at 426 cm<sup>-1</sup> and an ill-defined shoulder at 432 cm<sup>-1</sup> increase in wavenumber and occur as two well resolved bands at 429 cm<sup>-1</sup> on cooling to 15 K.

iv. v<sub>8</sub>, the antisymmetric CuC stretching vibration.

The and by components are unseparated at room

temperature in the infra-red spectrum at 377.5 cm<sup>-1</sup>. The ag and bg components occur as a band at 388 cm<sup>-1</sup> and a weak shoulder at 373 cm<sup>-1</sup> respectively in the Raman spectrum at room temperature and increase in wavenumber slightly to a band at 389 cm<sup>-1</sup> and very weak band at 382 cm<sup>-1</sup> on cooling to 15°K.

v.  $v_5$ , the formally  $a_2$  antisymmetric CuCN bending vibration

This assignment is made on the grounds that the band observed at  $357.5~\rm cm^{-1}$  in the Raman spectrum at room temperature is effectively infra-red inactive. The  $a_g$  and  $b_g$  components increase in wavenumbers and separate at  $363~\rm cm^{-1}$  and  $358~\rm cm^{-1}$  respectively on cooling to  $15^{\circ}\rm K$ .

vi. v3, the totally symmetric CuCN bending vibration.

This assignment is made on the basis of the relative weakness of the infra-red components and the relative strength of the Raman components. The b<sub>u</sub> and a<sub>u</sub> components occur at room temperature in the infra-red spectrum at 342.5 cm<sup>-1</sup> and 331.5 cm<sup>-1</sup> respectively. The a<sub>g</sub> and b<sub>g</sub> components at 345 cm<sup>-1</sup> and as an ill-defined shoulder at 337 cm<sup>-1</sup> respectively in the Raman spectrum at room temperature increase slightly in wave number to 348 cm<sup>-1</sup> and a discrete band at 338 cm<sup>-1</sup> on cooling to 15°K.

vii.  $v_8$ , the formally  $b_2$  antisymmetric CuCN bending vibration.

This assignment is made on the basis of the relative strength of the infra-red band and the relative weakness of the Raman components. The  $a_u$  and  $b_u$  components are unseparated at room temperature in the infra-red spectrum at 305 cm<sup>-1</sup>. The  $a_g$  and  $b_g$  components are separated at room temperature in the Raman spectrum at 315 cm<sup>-1</sup> and 291 cm<sup>-1</sup> respectively and increase in wave number slightly to 315 cm<sup>-1</sup> and 298 cm<sup>-1</sup> on cooling to  $15^{\circ}$ K (A very weak ill-defined shoulder at 306 cm<sup>-1</sup> at room temperature disappears on cooling).

viii. v<sub>6</sub>, the formally b<sub>1</sub> antisymmetric CuCN bending vibration,

The au and bu components appear unseparated as an ill-defined shoulder at 286 cm<sup>-1</sup> in the infra-red spectrum at room temperature. The ag and bg components are separated at 279 cm<sup>-1</sup> and 272 cm<sup>2</sup> respectively in the Raman spectrum at room temperature and decrease in wave number slightly to 280 cm<sup>-1</sup> and 265 cm<sup>-1</sup> on cooling to 15°K.

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