Chiral Brønsted Acid-Catalyzed Metal-Free Asymmetric Direct **Reductive Amination Using 1-Hydrosilatrane**

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Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: The asymmetric direct reductive amination of prochiral ketones with aryl amines using 1-hydrosilatrane with a chiral Brønsted acid catalyst is reported. This is the first known example of chiral Brønsted acid-catalyzed asymmetric reductive amination using a silane as the hydride source. The reaction features a highly practical reducing reagent and proceeds efficiently at room temperature without a specialized reaction setup or equipment to exclude air or moisture. This method provides high conversion and enantiomeric excess up to 84% of the desired chiral secondary amines with minimal side products.

■ INTRODUCTION

Direct reductive amination (DRA) is the most practical method for synthesizing secondary and tertiary amines, molecules that are highly desired for pharmaceutical, agricultural, and fine chemical reagent applications. Many of these important amines are chiral, and the development of new and improved methods for the synthesis of optically active amines has long been a thriving field in organic chemistry.²

Current methods can be split into two major categories: transition metal-catalyzed and metal-free organocatalyzed reactions. Transition metal-catalyzed reactions usually use hydrogen gas and an iridium, platinum, or palladium catalyst;^{3–5} these metal reagents are expensive, toxic, and not always easy to work with. The organocatalyzed variations typically utilize either a Hantzsch ester⁶ or trichlorosilane as the hydride source (noteworthy examples in Figure 1); Hantzsch esters are expensive to purchase and have poor atom economy in synthesis and use, and trichlorosilane is both difficult to work with and produces a large amount of halogenated waste. Researchers have explored boutique hydride reagents (such as benzothiazolines⁸ and indolines⁹), but the lack of ready availability of these reagents hampers their widespread adoption. In short, while excellent methods to access valuable enantioenriched amines have been developed, there is significant opportunity to optimize the balance of userfriendliness, cost-effectiveness, safety, and toxicity of such a transformation.

1-Hydrosilatrane (1) was first synthesized by Frye et al. in 1961, 10 but despite possessing many attributes that enable efficient hydride transfer, it had been overlooked as a reducing reagent until recently. 11-13 1 contains a silicon with an expanded octet due to the lone pair on the nitrogen interacting

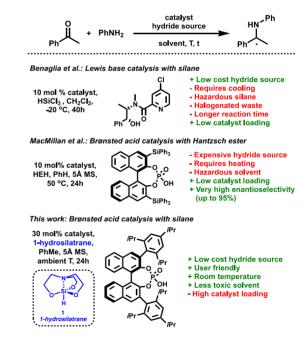


Figure 1. Metal-free asymmetric DRA.

with the caged silicon; 14 hypercoordination of a silane increases electron density on silane-bonded atoms making, in this case, the hydride more hydridic. 15 Despite this embedded reactivity, 1 is air- and moisture-stable, nontoxic, and can be synthesized economically in high purity and yield.

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Previously, our lab has developed efficient and user-friendly methods using 1-hydrosilatrane (1) in the reduction of aldehydes¹¹ and ketones, ¹² and in DRA of these carbonyl-containing compounds. ¹³ Aldehydes and ketones undergo rapid reduction by 1 in the presence of a Brønsted base activator, while DRA of aldehydes and ketones with secondary amines are solvent- and activator-free. To effect DRA of ketones/aldehydes with primary amines, the reaction must be performed in the presence of a Brønsted acid, specifically acetic acid in the original report. 13 The dependence of reactivity on the addition of this activator provided an opportunity to impart enantioselectivity to the reaction while utilizing the same convenient stoichiometric reductant; with this in mind, we sought to use chiral Brønsted acids to induce enantioselectivity in the DRA of ketones with primary amines. Here, we describe this novel method using 1-hydrosilatrane and a chiral phosphoric acid catalyst for DRA with high yields and good enantiomeric excess (ee).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The investigation began by optimizing conditions for the reaction between acetophenone (2) and aniline (3) to yield 4 (Table 1). As the achiral reaction was activated by acetic acid,

Table 1. Catalyst Screening

76

entry catalyst
$$ee^{a}$$
 conversion

1c $Ho^{0}_{H} \stackrel{\circ}{H} \stackrel{$

^aee determined by chiral GCMS. ^bConversion determined by GC-FID. ^cReaction run in acetonitrile. ^dReaction run in ethyl acetate. ^eReaction run in benzene.

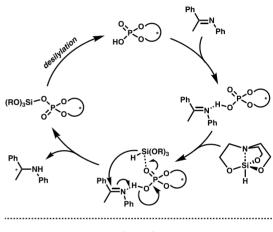
68

95

chiral carboxylic acids were tested first. Tartaric acid (5) and its derivatives 6 and 7 (entry 1–3) were tested in polar solvents to maximize dissolution, but only gave relatively low conversions of up to 50% and no optical activity was observed in the products. More commonly used BINOL-derived chiral phosphoric acids were then tested, as these molecules have

become increasingly popular because of their versatility in a broad range of asymmetric reactions¹⁶ and have demonstrated high enantioselectivities in the reduction of imines.^{17,18} The parent compound 8 (entry 4) gave higher conversion but still low ee. Increasing the bulkiness of the activator 9 (entry 5) and switching the solvent to benzene increased the ee slightly but decreased the conversion. Activator 10 (entry 6), which had previously been used with Hantzsch esters,¹⁷ was not effective, resulting in a low ee of 12% and conversion of 50%. Finally, and gratifyingly, bulky activator 11^{17b,18} (entry 7) provided a very good ee of 68% and excellent conversion (95%).

A model for selecting chiral phosphoric acids reported by Reid and Goodman in 2017 justifies the effectiveness of activator 11 in our system and predicts the enantioselectivity observed.¹⁹ This work also allows us to propose a possible mechanism for our reactions (Figure 2). After an imine is



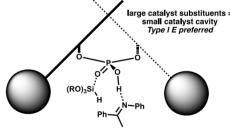


Figure 2. Catalytic cycle for asymmetric DRA (top) and transition state predicting stereoselectivity (bottom) from Reid et al.¹⁷

formed in situ, the chiral phosphoric acid protonates the imine. This complex then further coordinates 1-hydrosilatrane in a relatively tight pocket, allowing for enantioselective hydrogen transfer to occur. The imine is in an (*E*)-conformer as the steric hindrance is greater between the two aryl groups than with the chiral phosphoric acid. Following reduction of the protonated imine to an amine, the silatranephosphate is hydrolyzed to reform the catalyst.

The reaction solvent was optimized for activator 11 (Table 2). Benzene showed good results (entry 1) with 68% ee and almost quantitative conversions. With the intention of making the reaction more environmentally friendly, acetonitrile and ethyl acetate were tested (entry 2 and 3, respectively), but neither of these options resulted in improved ee or conversion. In fact, the enantioselectivity decreased in correlation with solvent polarity, which is not surprising given that tight hydrogen bonding between the phosphoric acid and the imine is required for stereochemical information to be transmitted

Table 2. Solvent Optimization

| entry | solvent ^a | ee ^b | conversion ^c |
|-------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | PhH | 68 | 95 |
| 2 | MeCN | 6 | 74 |
| 3 | EtOAc | 50 | 77 |
| 4 | PhMe | 70 | 99 |

^aAnhydrous solvents. ^bee determined by chiral GCMS. ^cConversion determined by GC-FID.

from the catalyst to substrate. Toluene (entry 4) marginally increased the ee (to 70%) and gave quantitative conversion to the product and therefore was chosen as the solvent for future trials

Efforts were also made to explore the impact of catalyst loading on the reaction outcome (Table 3). The yield and ee

Table 3. Catalyst Loading

| entry | X (equiv of 11) ^a | ee ^b | conversion ^c |
|-------|------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | 1 | 72 | 99 |
| 2 | 0.8 | 72 | 99 |
| 3 | 0.5 | 70 | 99 |
| 4 | 0.3 | 70 | 92 |
| 5 | 0.1 | 60 | 60 |

^aEquivalents with respect to limiting reagent (aniline). ^bee determined by chiral GCMS. ^cConversion determined by GC-FID.

of the reaction were not significantly impacted between a stoichiometric amount and 50 mol %. A small dropoff in yield was noted when further limiting the amount of catalyst to 30 mol %, but both the yield and ee dropped dramatically at 10 mol %. After balancing results with catalyst cost and waste generation, we decided to push forward with a catalyst loading of 30 mol %.

Using the optimized conditions, a small variety of ketones were reacted with aniline and o-methoxyaniline to test the scope for the asymmetric DRA (Figure 3). The scope was limited to aniline and o-methoxyaniline because of the relatively limited ability of the gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS) chiral column in separating the enantiomers. Reaction of aniline and acetophenone proceeded smoothly with a complete conversion to the corresponding amine (12) in 72% ee. Bulkier propiophenone formed 13 in excellent yield with an increased ee of 76%, while the even bulkier isobutyrophenone formed 14 with a significant decrease in conversion and lower ee of 60%. o-Methoxyaniline reacted with acetophenone, forming 15 with only slight decrease in conversion and ee, indicating that this method provides a relatively easy pathway to asymmetric primary amines via oxidative diarylation using methods previously reported in the literature.2

Electron-poor *p*-nitroacetophenone showed quantitative conversion to **16**, but the ee decreased to 56%, while

Figure 3. Reaction scope and limitations.

electron-rich *p*-methoxyacetophenone reacted with aniline in excellent conversion to give 17 with 66% ee. Reaction of parasubstituted halides (18 and 19) gave excellent conversion and ee, with *p*-fluoroacetophenone forming 19 with 84% ee. 2-Acetylpyridine reacted with aniline to form 20 in good conversion, although the ee was not determined precisely as the two enantiomers were unable to be separated effectively on the available chiral GC/MS column. An aliphatic ketone gave good conversion, although the ee was low (21). Finally, the method was extended to a ketoester: although the racemic reaction with acetic acid gave a relatively good conversion, ¹³ the chiral counterpart resulted in negligible conversion to 22 with no ee. This could be due to intramolecular hydrogen bonding that stabilizes the positive charge on the iminium ion making it less prone to hydride transfer.

We have developed a new method for enantioselective DRA using a substituted BINOL-derived-phosphoric acid and 1-hydrosilatrane. We were able to achieve excellent conversions and up to 84% ee in the case of 4-flouroacetophenone and aniline. This work demonstrates the potential of 1-hydrosilatrane to replace less user- and environmentally friendly reagents as a mild hydride source for such reactions. We anticipate that further manipulation of the identity and structure of the reagents will make this general approach for DRA viable for synthesis of pharmaceutical and industrial applications.

■ EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

General Information. All chemicals were obtained from commercial sources and used without further purification, unless specified. Hydrosilatrane ^{11a} and phosphoric acids 10^{17b} and 11¹⁸ were prepared using known procedures. Column chromatography was

performed using silica gel from Macherey-Nagel (60 M, 0.04–0.063 mm). $^1{\rm H}$ NMR, and $^{13}{\rm C}$ NMR were recorded on either a 300, 500 MHz Bruker AVANCE III spectrometer, or a 400 MHz Bruker AV400. Chemical shifts were reported in ppm with the solvent resonance as internal standard ($^1{\rm H}$ NMR CDCl $_3$ $\delta=7.28$, $^{13}{\rm C}$ NMR CDCl $_3$ $\delta=77.01$). IR spectra were acquired using an ATI Mattson Fourier transform infrared spectrophotometer on neat samples. MS data were obtained with a Shimadzu GCMS QC2010S spectrometer. Enantiomeric ratios were analyzed by a Shimadzu GCMS QC2010S spectrometer equipped with a chiral column (CP-Chirasil Dex CB 25 \times 0.25 \times 0.25). Helium was used as the mobile phase at a column pressure of 120 kPa and varying split flow rates specified in this Supporting Information. The injector temperature was 230 °C, and the FID temperature was 200 °C. The oven temperatures and the retention times are specified according to the substrate.

General Procedure for Synthesis of Racemic Secondary Amines. In a 5 dram vial equipped with a stir bar were combined 1-hydrosilatrane (2 mmol), ketone (3 mmol), amine (1 mmol), and 1 mL of acetic acid. The vial was capped and stirred overnight. The resulting mixture was then diluted with diethylether and extracted three times with 1 M HCl. The aqueous layers were combined and neutralized with 3 M NaOH followed by extraction with dichloromethane three times. Combined organic layers were dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated under reduced pressure.

General Procedure for Synthesis of Chiral Secondary Amines. In a 5 dram vial a mixture of molecular sieves (5 Å), 1-hydrosilatrane (0.035 g, 0.2 mmol) acetophenone (0.036 mL, 0.31 mmol), aniline (0.01 mL, 0.11 mmol), and chiral activator (0.037 mmol) in 1 mL of toluene were stirred at room temperature overnight. A small portion of the mixture was then tested using a chiral GC/MS for ee. The enantiomeric ratio was determined using chirasil DEX-CB GC column.

Characterization of Isolated Racemic Products. *N*-(1-*Phenylethyl)aniline*²⁷ (12). 98% (198 mg), ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.38 (d, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 7.32 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 7.23 (tt, J = 7.3, 1.5 Hz, 1H), 7.10 (dd, J = 8.7, 7.3 Hz, 2H), 6.66 (tt, J = 7.3, 1.0 Hz, 1H), 6.53 (dd, J = 8.6, 1.1 Hz, 2H), 4.50 (q, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 4.2 (br, 1H), 1.53 (d, J = 6.6 Hz, 3H). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 147.2, 145.4, 129.1, 128.7, 126.9, 125.9, 117.4, 113.5, 53.6, 25.0. IR (ATR) 3408, 3022, 2972, 1599, 1502, 1317, 1257, 746, 690 cm⁻¹.

N-(1-Phenylpropyl)aniline²² (13). 99% (212 mg), ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.40–7.37 (m, 4H), 7.29–7.26 (m, 1H), 7.13 (dd, J = 7.5 Hz, 2H), 6.67 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 6.56 (dd, J = 8.6, 1.0 Hz, 2H), 4.27 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 4.10 (br, 1H), 1.87 (pd, J = 7, 3 Hz, 2H), 1.00 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 147.6, 144.0, 129.1, 128.5, 126.9, 126.5, 117.1, 113.3, 59.7, 31.69, 10.85. IR (ATR) 3407, 2964, 2929, 2873, 1600, 1504, 1452, 1317, 1180, 1105, 1027, 1004, 902, 867, 746, 692 cm⁻¹.

N-(2-Methyl-1-phenylpropyl)aniline²³ (**14**). 75% (171 mg), 1 H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.32 (d, J = 4.2 Hz, 4H), 7.26–7.20 (m, 1H), 7.09 (dd, J = 8.4, 7.4 Hz, 2H), 6.63 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 6.52 (dd, J = 8.4, 1 Hz, 2H), 4.15 (d, J = 6 Hz, 2H), 2.06 (oc, J = 6.3 Hz, 1H), 1.01 (d, J = 7 Hz, 3H), 0.95 (d, J = 7 Hz, 3H). 13 C{ 1 H} NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 147.7, 142.6, 129.1, 128.2, 127.2, 126.8, 117.0, 113.2, 63.8, 34.9, 19.7, 18.6. IR (ATR): 3421, 3021, 2958, 2871, 1600, 1502, 1452, 1367, 1313, 1267, 1178, 1078, 1027, 756, 690 cm $^{-1}$.

2-Methoxy-N-(1-phenylethyl)aniline²⁴ (15). 64% (145 mg), ${}^{1}\mathrm{H}$ NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.40–7.31 (m, 4H), 7.25–7.22 (m, 1H), 6.79 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 6.72 (t, J = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 6.63 (t, J = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 6.36 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 4.67 (s, 1H), 4.50 (q, J = 6.7 Hz, 1H), 3.90 (s, 3H), 1.57 (d, J = 6.7 Hz, 3H). ${}^{13}\mathrm{C}^{1}\mathrm{H}$ NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 146.6, 145.6, 137.3, 128.7, 126.9, 125.9, 121.3, 116.4, 111.0, 109.3, 55.5, 53.4, 25.3. IR (ATR) 3424, 3062, 2962, 2832, 1735, 1685, 1602, 1509, 1454, 1427, 1349, 1249, 1222, 1176, 1143, 1108, 1049, 1025, 900, 759, 734, 700 cm $^{-1}$.

N-(1-(4-Nitrophenyl)ethyl)aniline²⁵ (**16**). 30% (70 mg), ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.20 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.55 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.10 (dd, J = 8.7, 7.4 Hz, 2H), 6.70 (tt, J = 7.4, 1.0 Hz, 1H), 6.46 (dd, J = 8.7, 1.1 Hz, 1H), 4.58 (q, J = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 4.17 (s, 1H), 1.56

(d, J=6.9 Hz, 3H). 13 C{ 1 H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 153.2, 147.1, 146.5, 129.3, 126.7, 124.1, 118.0, 113.3, 53.4, 24.9 IR (ATR) 3409, 3052, 2971, 2927, 1598, 1513, 1504, 1450, 1430, 1340, 1317, 1280, 1257, 1205, 1180, 1143, 1106, 1012, 854, 748, 692 cm $^{-1}$.

N-(1-(4-Methoxyphenyl)ethyl)aniline²⁶ (17). 70% (161 mg), 1 H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.30 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.11 (dd, J = 8.7, 7.3 Hz, 2H), 6.88 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 6.67 (tt, J = 7.3, 1.1 Hz, 1H), 6.54 (dd, J = 8.7, 1.0 Hz, 2H), 4.47 (q, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 4.07 (br, 1H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 1.51 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 3H). 13 C{ 1 H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 158.5, 147.3, 137.2, 129.1, 126.9, 117.3, 114.0, 113.4, 55.3, 52.9, 25.0. IR (ATR): 3405, 2962, 1602, 1504, 1461, 1317, 1284, 1241, 1176, 1105, 1031, 993, 829, 748, 692, 545 cm $^{-1}$.

N-(1-(4-Fluorophenyl)ethyl)aniline²⁷ (18). 97% (235 mg) 1 H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.38–7.34 (m, 2H), 7.13 (t, J = 8 Hz, 2H), 7.03 (t, J = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 6.69 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 6.52 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 4.50 (q, J = 7 Hz, 1H), 4.03 (s, 1H), 1.53 (d, J = 6.6 Hz, 3H). 13 C{ 1 H} NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 147.1, 140.9, 129.1, 127.3 (d, J_{CF} = 12.5 Hz), 117.4, 115.4 (d, J_{CF} = 36.25 Hz), 113.3, 52.9, 25.2. IR (ATR) 3411, 3050, 2969, 1600, 1504, 1429, 1373, 1315, 1257, 1218, 1155, 1139, 1093, 1014, 833, 748, 690 cm $^{-1}$.

N-(1-(4-Bromophenyl)ethyl)aniline²¹ (19). 96% (282 mg), ${}^{1}\mathrm{H}$ NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.47 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.28 (d, J = 8.4 2H), 7.13 (dd, J = 8.5, 7.4 Hz, 2H), 6.69 (t, 7.3 Hz, 1H), 6.50 (dd, J = 8.5, 1.2 Hz, 2H), 4.47 (q, J = 6.6 Hz, 1H), 4.03 (s, 1H), 1.52 (d, J = 7 Hz, 3H). ${}^{13}\mathrm{C}^{1}\mathrm{H}^{1}$ NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 147.0, 144.4, 131.8, 129.2, 127.7, 120.5, 117.6, 113.3, 53.1, 25.1. IR (ATR) 3415, 2966, 1600, 1502, 1429, 1402, 1317, 1255, 1180, 1139, 1070, 1008, 908, 821, 748, 690 cm⁻¹.

 \dot{N} -(1-(Pyridin-2-yl)ethyl)aniline²⁸ (**20**). 79% (172 mg), 1 H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.60 (d, J = 4.1 Hz, 1H), 7.63 (td, J = 7.65, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.37 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 7.14 (m, 3H), 6.68 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 6.58 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 4.64 (q, J = 6.6 Hz, 1H), 4.47 (s, 1H), 1.57 (d, J = 6.6 Hz, 3H). 13 C{ 1 H} NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 163.9, 149.3, 147.1, 136.8, 129.2, 122.0, 120.3, 117.4, 113.4, 54.8, 23.2. IR (ATR) 3403, 2969, 1600, 1502, 1471, 1432, 1317, 1259, 1180, 1153, 1025, 993, 869, 784, 746, 692 cm $^{-1}$.

N-(1-Cyclohexylethyl)aniline²⁷ (21). 72% (146 mg), ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.18 (dd, J = 8.5, 7.3 Hz, 2H), 6.68 (tt, J = 7.3, 1.0 Hz, 1H), 6.60 (dd, J = 8.8, 1.1 Hz, 2H), 3.50 (s, 1H), 3.35 (p, J = 6.5 Hz, 1H), 1.89–1.70 (m, 5H), 1.53–1.44 (m, 1H), 1.34–1.19 (m, 3H), 1.15 (d, J = 6.5 Hz, 3H), 1.10–1.06 (m, 1H). ¹³C{¹H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 148.0, 129.3, 116.5, 113.0, 53.0, 43.0, 29.8, 28.4, 26.7, 26.5, 26.4, 17.5. IR (ATR) 3413, 2921, 2850, 1600, 1504, 1448, 1429, 1373, 1317, 1253, 1155, 1074, 991, 863, 744, 690 cm⁻¹.

Ethyl 2-((2-Methoxyphenyl)amino)-2-phenylacetate²⁹ (22). 61% (155 mg), ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.53 (dd, J = 8.0, 1.5 2H), 7.39–7.31 (m, 3H), 6.82–6.66 (m, 3H), 6.37 (dd, J = 7.5, 1.5 Hz, 1H), 5.50 (d, J = 6 Hz, 1H), 5.08 (d, J = 6.3, 1H), 4.313–4.10 (m, 2H), 3.91 (s, 3H), 1.23 (t, J = 7.2 Hz), 3H. ¹³C{¹H} NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 171.8, 147.1, 137.8, 136.0, 128.8, 128.1, 127.2, 121.0, 117.3, 110.7, 109.6, 61.7, 60.8, 55.5, 14.1. IR (ATR) 3423, 2937, 1733, 1602, 1511, 1456, 1429, 1315, 1247, 1222, 1178, 1139, 1025, 730, 696 cm⁻¹.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

S Supporting Information

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Synthetic details and NMR characterization for select catalysts and full range of products, and chiral GCMS data (PDF)

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The manuscript was written through contributions of all authors.

Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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