JOC The Journal of Organic Chemistry

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J. Org. Chem., **Just Accepted Manuscript** • DOI: 10.1021/acs.joc.8b03073 • Publication Date (Web): 11 Apr 2019

ACS Publications

is published by the American Chemical Society. 1155 Sixteenth Street N.W., Washington, DC 20036

Chiral Brønsted acid catalyzed metal free asymmetric direct reductive amination using 1-hydrosilatrane

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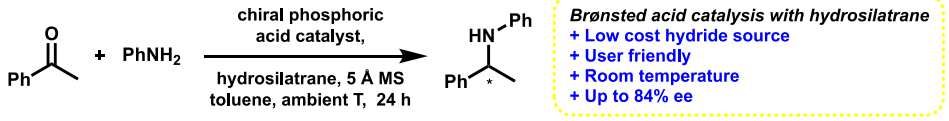
Supporting Information Placeholder



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 specialized reaction setup or equipment to exclude air or moisture. This method provides high conversion and *ee*s up to 84% of the desired chiral secondary amines with minimal side products.

INTRODUCTION

Direct reductive amination reaction (DRA) is the most practical method for synthesizing primary and secondary amines, molecules that are highly desired for pharmaceutical, agricultural, and fine chemical reagent applications.[1] 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 ester[6] or trichlorosilane as the hydride source (noteworthy examples in Figure 1);[7] 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 benzothiazolines[8] and indolines[9]), 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 user-friendliness, 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 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, non-toxic, and can be synthesized economically in high purity and yield.

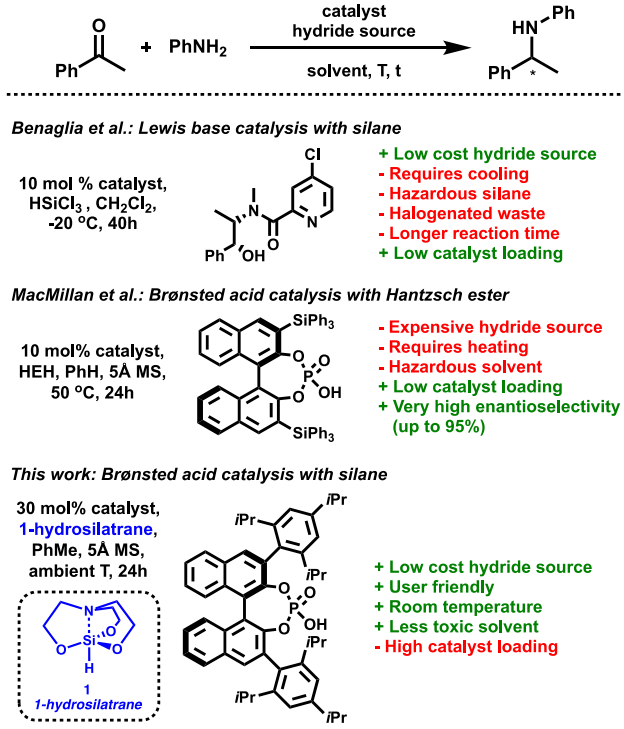


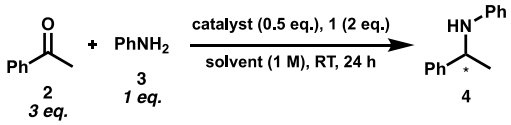
Figure 1. Metal-free asymmetric direct reductive amination.

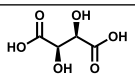
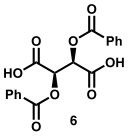
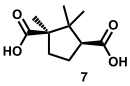
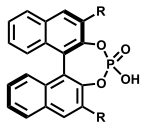
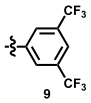
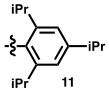
Previously, our lab has developed efficient and user-friendly methods using 1-hydrosilatrane (**1**) in the reduction of aldehydes[11] and ketones,[12] and in direct reductive amination of these carbonyl-containing compounds.[13] Aldehydes and ketones undergo rapid reduction by **1** in the presence of a Brønsted base activator whilst direct reductive amination of aldehydes and ketones with secondary amines are solvent and activator free. To effect direct reductive amination 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 direct reductive amination of ketones with primary amines. Here, we describe this novel method using 1-hydrosilatrane and a chiral phosphoric acid catalyst for direct reductive amination 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, 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 due to their versatility in a broad range of asymmetric reactions[16] 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 8% 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%).

Table 1. Catalyst screening.



entry	catalyst	*ee*[a]	conversion[b]
1[c]	 **5**	0	25
2[c]	 **6**	0	25
3[d]	 **7**	0	50
4[d]	R = H **8**	4	80
5[e]	 *catalysts 8-11* R =  **9**	9	60
6[e]	R = $SiPh_3$ **10**	12	50
7[e]	R =  **11**	68	95

[a]*ee* determined by chiral GCMS. [b]Conversion determined by GC-FID. [c]Reaction run in acetonitrile. [d]Reaction run in ethyl acetate. [e]Reaction run in benzene.

A model for selecting chiral phosphoric acids reported by Reid et al. 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 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*)-confomer 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 from 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.

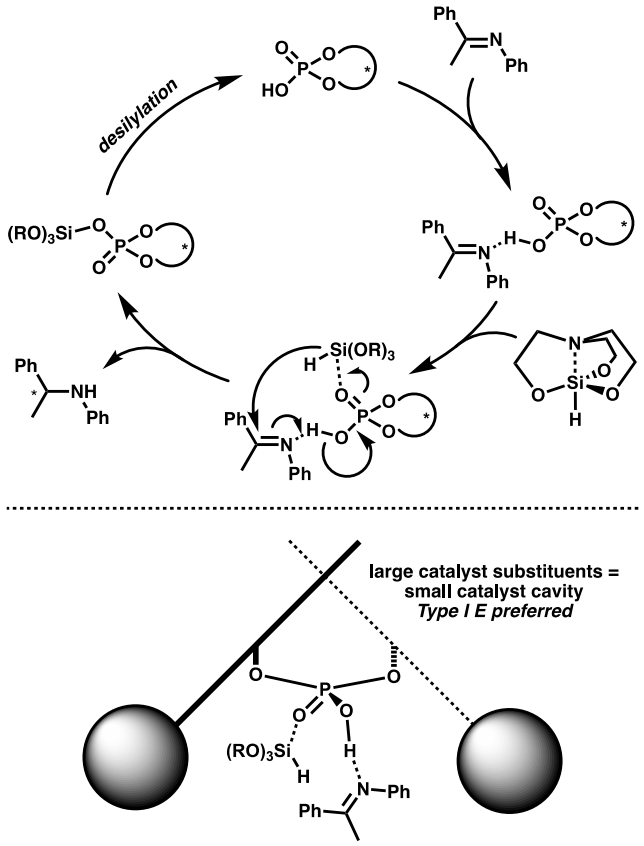
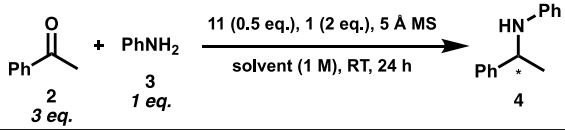


Figure 2. Catalytic cycle for asymmetric direct reductive amination (top) and transition state predicting stereoselectivity (bottom) from Reid et al.[17]

Efforts were also made to explore the impact of catalyst loading on the reaction outcome (Table 3). The yield and *ee* 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 direct reductive amination (Figure 3). The scope was limited to aniline and *o*-methoxyaniline, due to the relatively limited ability of the 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%, whilst 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 literature.[20]

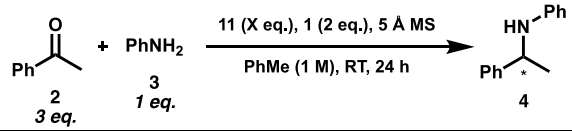
Table 2. Solvent optimization.



Entry	Solvent[a]	*ee*[b]	Conversion[c]
1	PhH	68	95
2	MeCN	6	74
3	EtOAc	50	77
4	PhMe	70	99

[a]Anhydrous solvents. [b]*ee* determined by chiral GCMS. [c]Conversion determined by GC-FID.

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

[a]Equivalents with respect to limiting reagent (aniline). [b]*ee* determined by chiral GCMS. [c]Conversion determined by GC-FID.

Electron poor *p*-nitroacetophenone showed quantitative conversion to **16** but the *ee* decreased to 56%, whilst electron rich *p*-methoxyacetophenone reacted with aniline in excellent conversion to give **17** with 66% *ee*. Reaction of *para*-substituted 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. Aliphatic ketones 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.

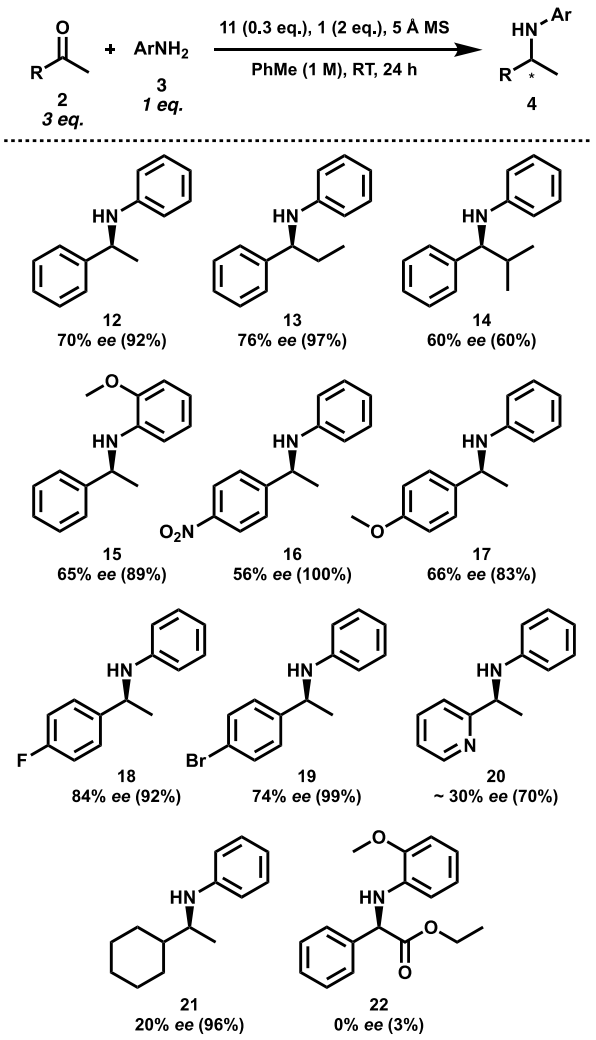


Figure 3. Reaction scope and limitations.

We have developed a new method for enantioselective direct reductive amination 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 direct reductive amination 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 **11**[18] were prepared using known procedures. Column chromatography was performed using silica gel from Macherey-Nagel (60 M, 0.04–0.063 mm). ^{1}H NMR, and ^{13}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}H NMR $CDCl_3$ δ = 7.28, ^{13}C NMR $CDCl_3$ δ = 77.01). IR spectra were acquired using an ATI Mattson FTIR 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 25x0.25x0.25). 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 dram vial equipped with a stir bar, was combined 1-hydrosilatrane (2 mmol), ketone (3 mmol), amine (1 mmol) and 1 mL of acetic acid. The vial was capped and stirred overnight. Resulting mixture was then diluted with diethylether and extracted three times with 1M HCl. The aqueous layers were combined and neutralized with 3M NaOH followed by extraction with dichloromethane three times. Combined organic layers were dried over Na_2SO_4 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 was stirred at room temperature overnight. A small portion of the mixture was then tested using a chiral GC/MS for enantiomeric excess. Enantiomeric ratio was determined using chirasil DEX-CB GC column.

Characterization of isolated racemic products

***N*-(1-phenylethyl)aniline[21] (12)** 98% (198 mg), ^{1}H NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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, 7.3Hz, 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). ^{13}C{^{1}H} NMR (100 MHz, $CDCl_3$): 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)aniline[22] (13)** 99% (212 mg), ^{1}H NMR (300 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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). ^{13}C{^{1}H} NMR (75 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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)aniline[23] (14)** 75% (171 mg), ^{1}H NMR (300 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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, $CDCl_3$) 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)aniline[24] (15) 64% (145 mg), ^1H NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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). $^{13}C\{^1H\}$ NMR (100 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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)aniline[25] (16)** 30% (70 mg), ^1H NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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). $^{13}C\{^1H\}$ NMR (100 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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)aniline[26] (17)** 70% (161 mg), ^1H NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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). $^{13}C\{^1H\}$ NMR (100 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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)aniline[27] (18)** 97% (235 mg) ^1H NMR (300 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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). $^{13}C\{^1H\}$ NMR (75 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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)aniline[21] (19)** 96% (282 mg), ^1H NMR (300 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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). $^{13}C\{^1H\}$ NMR (75 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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}.

***N*-(1-(pyridin-2-yl)ethyl)aniline[28] (20)** 79% (172 mg), ^1H NMR (300 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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). $^{13}C\{^1H\}$ NMR (75 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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)aniline[27] (21)** 72% (146 mg), ^1H NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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). $^{13}C\{^1H\}$ NMR (100 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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-phenylacetate[29] (22) 61% (155 mg), ^1H NMR (300 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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. $^{13}C\{^1H\}$ NMR (75 MHz, $CDCl_3$) 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

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website.

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

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors are grateful for financial support provided by Northern Illinois University (NIU).

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