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## SYNTHESIS OF TRI- AND DISALICYLALDEHYDES AND THEIR CHIRAL SCHIFF BASE COMPOUNDS

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A suitable procedure for convenient preparation of 1,3,5-tris(4-hydroxy-5-formylphenyl)benzene (6) was exploited via 5-bromosalicylaldehyde as starting reactant. Among the obtained products, compound 6, 4-methoxy-3-formylphenylboronic acid (9), 1,3,5-tris(4methoxy-5-formylphenyl)benzene (10), and 4-methoxy-4'-hydroxyl-3,3'-diformyl-1,1'diphenyl (11) had not been reported previously. Two new chiral Schiff base ligands, L1 and L2, were obtained from the tri- or disalicylaldehydes.

Keywords: 5-Bromosalicylaldehyde; disalicylaldehyde; Schiff base ligands; trisalicylaldehyde

#### INTRODUCTION

Salicylaldehydes and their derivatives can be transformed to Schiff bases and salen compounds, which are important ligands and have been widely used in asymmetric catalysis.<sup>[1]</sup> Transition-metal complexes containing chiral Schiff bases or salen ligands can catalyze many enantioselective reactions, such as asymmetric oxidation of sulfides,<sup>[2]</sup> epoxidation of olefins,<sup>[3]</sup> cyclopropanation of styrene,<sup>[4]</sup> and asymmetric hetero-Diels–Alder reactions.<sup>[5]</sup> Monosalicylaldehydes and their Schiff base ligands have been widely studied, for example, 3-aryl-5-butylsalicylaldehydes were prepared in our group by the Suzuki–Miyaura coupling reaction, as well as 10 new Schiff base ligands,<sup>[6]</sup> which were applied to the asymmetric oxidation of aryl methyl sulfides to give good to excellent ee values (up to 90% ee).<sup>[7]</sup>

However, there are few reports concerning the synthesis of tri- or disalicylaldehydes and the catalytic reactions using their Schiff base ligands. In 2007, Suresh and coworkers prepared chiral Schiff base ligands 1 and 2 by condensation of two

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Scheme 1. Schiff base ligands 1 and 2.

trisalicylaldehydes and chiral aminoalcohol, which catalyzed the asymmetric oxidation of thioanisole with good ee values (Scheme 1).<sup>[8]</sup>

In this article, we describe the synthesis of trisalicylaldehyde by hydroxyl protection and formyl protection, forming arylboronic acid, followed by Suzuki–Miyaura coupling reaction and hydroxyl deprotection. Moreover, disalicylaldehyde was prepared via the same method as the synthesis of trisalicylaldehyde.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

At first, we attempted to prepare trisalicylaldehyde **6** through the simple synthetic route as outlined in Scheme 2: 1,3,5-tribromobenzene transformed to 1,3,5-tribronic acid benzene **4** first, and then the Suzuki–Miyaura coupling reaction of **4** with 5-bromosalicylaldehyde **5** gave trisalicylaldehyde **6**. Unfortunately, all attempts at forming arylboronic acid **4** were unsuccessful, presumably because of the instability of the intermediate of **3** with *n*-BuLi.

Therefore, another synthetic route was designed to obtain trisalicylaldehyde 6, shown in Scheme 3. Because phenol hydroxyl and formyl groups would be destroyed in the presence of a strong base, they need to be protected. Compound 7 was conveniently prepared in acetone for 10 h, and then it was reacted with triethylortho-formate in absolute EtOH and a catalytic amount of  $ZrCl_4$  to obtain compound 8. Lithiation of compound 8 with 1.2 equiv. of *n*-BuLi in tetrahydrofuran (THF) at  $-78 \,^{\circ}C$  followed by reaction with 2.0 equiv. of B(O<sup>n</sup>Bu)<sub>3</sub> and acidic hydrolysis



Scheme 2. The simple synthetic route of preparing trisalicylaldehyde 6.



Scheme 3. Preparation of Schiff base L1.

produced arylboronic acid 9 in 94% yield as a yellow needle crystal. Refluxing a solution of 9 and 1,3,5-tribromobenzene in mixed ethylene glycol dimethyl ether (DME) and water (3/1, v/v) in the presence of 15 mol% Pd(PPh<sub>3</sub>)<sub>4</sub> and K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (6 equiv.) for 48 h provided trialdehyde 10 in 38% yield. Compound 10 was reacted with BBr<sub>3</sub> in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> at -78 °C and then hydrolyzed to obtain trisalicylaldehyde 6. In this step, the resulting mixture needed to be slowly and carefully added into chilled water and stirred continuously until two liquid layers formed. Therefore, trisalicylaldehyde 6 was transformed to the corresponding Schiff base L1 in 36% yield as a salmon-pink solid by condensation with (*S*)-valinol.

According to the literature, there are some reports of the synthesis of disalicylaldehydes.<sup>[9]</sup> Using the method of preparing trisalicylaldehyde **6** as a base, we succeeded in synthesizing disalicylaldehyde **12** and its chiral Schiff base ligand **L2**. The synthesis of chiral Schiff base ligand **L2** is summarized in Scheme 4.

Compound 11 was obtained in 78% yield by taking advantage of the Suzuki– Miyaura coupling reaction with 5-bromosalicylaldehyde 5 (1 equiv.) and arylboronic acid 9 (1.2 equiv.) as reactants in mixed DME and water (3:1) at 90 °C for 6 h. Compound 11 was reacted with BBr<sub>3</sub> in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> at -15 °C and then hydrolyzed to obtain disalicylaldehyde 12 as a light green solid in 67% yield. Thus, 2 equiv. of (S)-valinol and disalicylaldehyde 12 were dissolved in an appropriate volume of anhydrous ethanol and stirred for 12 h at 60 °C. After flash-column chromatography and drying in vacuo, the chiral Schiff base ligand L2 was obtained in 56% yield.

In conclusion, trisalicylaldehyde 6 and disalicylaldehyde 12 were successfully synthesized via 5-bromosalicylaldehyde as starting reactant. Among the obtained compounds, 6, 9, 10, and 11 have not been reported previously. Two new chiral Schiff base ligands, L1 and L2, have also been prepared. The application of the



Scheme 4. Preparation of Schiff base L2.

two new chiral Schiff base ligands is currently being explored for asymmetric oxidation of sulfides.

#### **EXPERIMENTAL**

#### **General Procedures**

Catalysts  $Pd(PPh_3)_4^{[10]}$  and (S)-valinol<sup>[11]</sup> were obtained by literature procedures. Anhydrous THF was dried prior to use by distillation over sodium/benzophenone ketyl. Absolute ethanol was predried by 4-Å molecular sieves for 1 day and then distilled over sodium/diethyl phthalate. A mixture of DME/water was degassed before use for Suzuki–Miyaura coupling reactions. Melting points were measured on an XRc-1 melting-point apparatus and are uncorrected. NMR, mass spectroscopy (MS), and high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) spectra were recorded on Unity Inova 400-MHz or Brucker 400-MHz (with tetramethylsilane as internal standard), Hewlett 5973 or HP 1100 MSD, and Waters instruments, respectively. High-resolution mass spectra (HRMS) were obtained on a Micromass GCT-TOF mass spectrometer.

#### 5-Bromo-2-methoxybenzaldehyde (7)

Dimethylsulfate (1.51 g, 12 mmol) was added to a mixture of 5-bromosalicylaldehyde (5) (2.0 g, 10 mmol) and solid K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (2.76 g, 20 mmol) in acetone (30 mL). The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 10 h before being quenched with H<sub>2</sub>O (15 mL) and concentrated under reduced pressure. The residue was extracted with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (3 × 20 mL) and dried with anhydrous MgSO<sub>4</sub>. Evaporation of the solvent afforded the title compound as a white solid (2.0 g, 93%); mp 107–109 °C (lit.<sup>[12]</sup>: 113.5–116.5 °C); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  3.37 (s, 3H, OCH<sub>3</sub>), 6.88 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.61 (dd, J = 2.4, 2.8 Hz, 1H), 7.89 (d, J = 2.8 Hz, 1H), 10.36 (s, 1H, CHO). EI-HRMS (C<sub>8</sub>H<sub>7</sub>BrO<sub>2</sub>): calcd. 213.9629; found 213.9634.

#### 4-Bromo-2-(diethoxymethyl)-1-methoxybenzene (8)

Triethylorthoformate (5.92 g, 40 mmol) and anhydrous  $\text{ZrCl}_4$  (0.02 g, 0.1 mmol) were added to a suspension of 5-bromo-2-methoxybenzaldehyde (7)

(4.28 g, 20 mmol) in absolute EtOH (20 mL). The mixture was stirred at room temperature for several minutes until the solid was dissolved. The resulting mixture was purified by chromatography (petroleum ether/EtOAc, 2.5/1) to give the title compound as a light green liquid (5.64 g, 98%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  1.22 [t, J = 4.4 Hz, 6H, (OCH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>], 3.59 [m, 4H, (OCH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>], 3.81 (s, 3H, OCH<sub>3</sub>), 5.72 [s, 1H, CH(OCH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>], 6.74 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.36 (dd, J = 2.4, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (d, J = 2.4 Hz, 1H); GC mass: 288.

#### 4-Methoxy-3-formylphenylboronic Acid (9)

aldehyde 4-bromo-2-(diethoxymethyl)-1solution of protected А methoxybenzene (8) (5.76 g, 20 mmol) in THF (30 mL) was cooled to -78 °C under argon. n-BuLi (2.9 M in hexanes, 8.3 mL, 24 mmol) was added dropwise over 30 min. The solution was stirred at -78 °C for 1 h before being quenched with B(O<sup>n</sup>Bu)<sub>3</sub> (9.2 g, 40 mmol). The yellow resulting solution was stirred at -78 °C for 2 h, allowed to warm slowly to room temperature, and was stirred overnight. The mixture was quenched with HCl (20 mL, 1 M) and extracted with Et<sub>2</sub>O ( $3 \times 20$  mL). The organic layer was washed twice with  $H_2O(20 \text{ mL})$  and once with brine (15 mL) and dried with anhydrous Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. The solvent was evaporated, and the crude product was purified by recrystallization from ethanol to obtain 3.39 g of yellow solid in a yield of 94%. Mp 206–208°C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR [400 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>C(O)CD<sub>3</sub>]: δ 3.11 [s, 2H,  $B(OH)_2$ ], 4.0 (s, 3H, OCH<sub>3</sub>), 7.19 (d, J=8.8 Hz, 1H), 8.13 (dd, J=2.0, 2.0 Hz, 1H), 8.28 (d, J = 3.6 Hz, 1H), 10.45 (s, 1H, CHO); <sup>13</sup>C NMR [CD<sub>3</sub>C(O)CD<sub>3</sub>]:  $\delta$ 55.6, 111.5, 124.3, 134.4, 142.4, 163.8, 189.1, 206.1. EI-HRMS (C<sub>8</sub>H<sub>9</sub>O<sub>4</sub>B): calcd. 180.0590; found 180.0594.

#### 1,3,5-Tris(4-methoxy-5-formylphenyl)benzene (10)

1,3,5-Tribromobenzene (0.78 g, 2.5 mmol), 4-methoxy-3-formylphenylboronic acid (9) (2.7 g, 15 mmol),  $K_2CO_3$  (2.07 g, 15 mmol), and Pd(PPh\_3)\_4 (0.73 g, 0.37 mmol, 15 mol%) were added to a Schlenk flask with a stirring bar. The mixture was purged with argon. Degassed solvent of DME/water (3/1, v/v, 100 mL) was then added. The mixture was refluxed with stirring in the dark at 90 °C for 48 h under the protection of argon. The organic layer was then separated, and the water layer was extracted with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (3 × 30 mL). The combined organic layers were washed with brine and dried over anhydrous Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, and then the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by chromatography on silica gel, eluting with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> to give the title compound as a white solid (0.46 g, 38%). Mp 257–258 °C;<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl\_3):  $\delta$  3.95 (s, 9H, OCH<sub>3</sub>), 7.06 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 3H), 7.65 (s, 3H), 7.84 (dd, J = 2.8, 2.4 Hz, 3H), 8.08 (d, J = 2.0 Hz, 3H), 10.48 (s, 3H, CHO). EI-HRMS (C<sub>30</sub>H<sub>24</sub>O<sub>6</sub>): calcd. 480.1573; found 480.1577.

#### 1,3,5-Tris(4-hydroxy-5-formylphenyl)benzene (6)

BBr<sub>3</sub> (1 M in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 3.2 mL, 3.2 mmol) was added at -78 °C under nitrogen to a suspension of 1,3,5-tris(4-methoxy-5-formylphenyl)benzene (10) (0.3 g, 0.63 mmol) in dry CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (6 mL). After 10 min, the external temperature was raised

to  $-15 \,^{\circ}$ C, and the dark brown suspension was stirred for 1 h. The resulting mixture was slowly poured into chilled water (10 mL) and stirred continuously until two liquid layers were formed. The aqueous phase was extracted with Et<sub>2</sub>O (3 × 20 mL). The combined organic layers were washed with brine, dried with MgSO<sub>4</sub>, and concentrated under reduced pressure. Purification by column chromatography (CC) (silica gel, CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/MeOH, 100/1) afforded the title compound as a pale white solid (0.18 g, 66%); mp > 300 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO):  $\delta$  7.15 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 3H), 7.81 (s, 3H), 8.07 (d, *J* = 9.6 Hz, 3H), 8.11 (s, 3H), 10.35 (s, 3H, CHO), 10.93 (s, 3H, OH); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (DMSO):  $\delta$  117.9, 122.5, 123.0, 127.6, 131.4, 135.2, 140.5, 160.5, 191.8. EI-HRMS (C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>18</sub>O<sub>6</sub>): calcd. 438.1103; found 438.1096.

#### Chiral Schiff Base Ligand L1

(S)-Valinol (0.48 g, 0.47 mmol) and 1,3,5-tris(4-hydroxy-5-formylphenyl)benzene (**6**) (0.8 g, 0.12 mmol) were dissolved in 4 mL of EtOH. The solution was stirred overnight at 60 °C. After the solvent was evaporated under reduced pressure, the residue was subject to flash-column chromatography on silica gel using CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/CH<sub>3</sub>OH (95/5) as eluent to give the title compound as a salmon-pink solid (0.27 g, 36%). Mp 129–132 °C;  $[\alpha]_{589}^{21} = -284.5^{\circ}$  (*c* 0.2, CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  0.98 [t, 18H, CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>], 1.98–1.91 [m, 3H, CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>], 3.21–3.08 (m, 3H, N-CH), 3.94–3.70 (m, 6H,CH<sub>2</sub>OH), 7.91 (s, 3H, CH=N), 7.28 (s, 3H), 6.63–6.61 (m, 9H), 14.15 (s, 3H, OH). EI-HRMS (C<sub>42</sub>H<sub>51</sub>N<sub>3</sub>O<sub>6</sub>): calcd. 693.3778; found 693.3771.

#### 4-Methoxy-4'-hydroxyl-3,3'-diformyl-1,1'-diphenyl (11)

5-Bromosalicylaldehyde (5) (0.76 g, 3.80 mmol), 3-formyl-4-methoxyphenylboronic acid (9) (0.82 mg, 4.56 mmol),  $K_2CO_3$  (0.79 g, 5.7 mmol), and Pd(PPh\_3)\_4 (0.22 g, 0.19 mmol, 5 mol%) were added to a Schlenk flask with a stirring bar. The mixture was purged with argon. Degassed solvent of DME/water (3/1, v/v, 35 mL) was then added. The mixture was refluxed with stirring at 90 °C for 6 h under the protection of argon. The organic layer was then separated, and the water layer was extracted with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (3 × 15 mL). The combined organic layers were washed with brine and dried over anhydrous MgSO<sub>4</sub>, and then the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by chromatography on silica gel, eluting with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> to give the title compound as a light green solid (0.76 g, 78%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  3.93 (s, 3H, OCH<sub>3</sub>), 7.00–7.04 (m, 2H), 7.68–7.71 (m, 3H), 7.97 (d, J = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 9.91 (s, 1H, CHO), 10.46 (s, 1H, CHO), 10.94 (s, 1H, OH); EI-HRMS (C<sub>15</sub>H<sub>12</sub>O<sub>4</sub>): calcd. 256.0736; found 256.0732.

#### 4,4'-Diol-3,3'-diformyl-1,1'-diphenyl (12)

BBr<sub>3</sub> (1 M in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 13.6 mL, 13.6 mmol) was added at -15 °C under nitrogen to a solution of 4-methoxy-4'-hydroxy-3,3'-biformyl-1,1'-biphenyl (11) (0.87 g, 3.4 mmol) in dry CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (10 mL). The dark brown suspension was stirred for 1 h. The resulting mixture was slowly poured into chilled water (30 mL) and stirred continuously until two liquid layers were formed. The aqueous phase was extracted with Et<sub>2</sub>O (3 × 20 mL). The combined organic layers were washed with water (2 × 20 mL) and brine, dried with MgSO<sub>4</sub>, and concentrated under reduced pressure. Purification by CC (silica gel, CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/MeOH, 95/5) afforded the title compound as a yellow solid (0.55 g, 67%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.04 (d, *J*=9.6 Hz, 2H), 7.66–7.68 (m, 4H), 9.93 (s, 2H, CHO), 10.95 (s, 2H, OH). EI-HRMS (C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>10</sub>O<sub>4</sub>): calcd. 242.0579; found 242.0576.

#### Chiral Schiff Base Ligand L2

(S)-Valinol (0.21 g, 2 mmol) and 4,4'-diol-3,3'-diformyl-1,1'-diphenyl (12) (0.24 g, 1 mmol) were dissolved in 4 mL of EtOH. The solution was stirred for 12 h at 60 °C. After the solvent was evaporated under reduced pressure, the residue was subject to flash-column chromatography on silica gel using petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (1/5) as eluent to give the title compound as a salmon-pink solid (0.23 g, 56%). Mp 88–90 °C;  $[\alpha]_{589}^{21} = -51.7^{\circ}$  (*c* 0.2, CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  0.92 (t, J = 6.8 Hz, 12H), 1.87–1.95 (m, 2H), 3.04–3.09 (m, 2H), 3.78–3.86 (m, 4H), 6.82 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.04 (s, 2H), 7.28 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 8.17 (s, 2H, CH=N), 13.91 (s, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): 165.8 (CH=N), 161.5 (*C*-OH), 130.8, 130.6, 129.3, 118.4, 117.8, 77.8 (CH-N), 64.7 (CH<sub>2</sub>OH), 30.4 [CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>], 20.0 and 18.8 [2C, CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>]. MS (API-ES): calcd. m/z 412.3, found 413.3 [M + H]<sup>+</sup>, 435.2 [M + Na]<sup>+</sup>.

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