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# **Supporting Information**

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## **1.** Experimental Details

All manipulations regarding the preparation of air-sensitive compounds were carried out under an atmosphere of dry nitrogen, using standard Schlenk and drybox techniques. Solvents were purified, dried and degassed according to standard procedures.

<sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker Avance 400 and internally referenced to the residual solvent resonances (CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>: <sup>1</sup>H  $\delta$  5.32 ppm, <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H}  $\delta$  53.84 ppm; CDCl<sub>3</sub>: <sup>1</sup>H  $\delta$  7.26 ppm, <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H}  $\delta$  77.16 ppm; THF-*d*<sub>8</sub>:  $\delta$  <sup>1</sup>H  $\delta$  3.58, 1.72 ppm, <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H}  $\delta$  67.21, 25.31 ppm). <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} and <sup>31</sup>P NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker Avance 400 and externally referenced (85% H<sub>3</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>). <sup>19</sup>F NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker Avance 250 and externally referenced (CFCl<sub>3</sub>). Melting points were measured on samples in sealed capillaries and are uncorrected. ESI Mass spectra were recorded on a Bruker Daltonics micrOTOF spectrometer in positive (capillary potential of 4500 V) ion mode.

White phosphorus was sublimed prior to use (40  $^{\circ}$ C, 1 x 10<sup>-3</sup> mbar), Li[Al(OC(CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>)<sub>4</sub>]<sup>[1]</sup> and 2,6-dimesitylphenyl lithium<sup>[2]</sup> (DmpLi) were prepared according to literature procedures and 2,4,6-trimethylphenyl lithium (MesLi) was prepared according to a modified literature procedure (see below).<sup>[3]</sup> All other reagents were purchased from commercial resources and used without further purification.

#### **Preparation of MesLi**·(OEt<sub>2</sub>)<sub>0.12</sub>:

*n*-BuLi (1.6 M in hexanes, 27.62 mL, 44.2 mmol, 1.1 equiv.) was added to a solution of MesBr (8 g, 6.15 mL, 40.2 mmol, 1 equiv.) in diethyl ether (80 mL) at room temperature, over a period of 30 minutes. The resulting bright yellow solution was stirred for 16 hours during which a white solid precipitated. The solvent was removed *in vacuo* after which the residue was washed with *n*-hexane (3 x 10 mL) to give analytically pure **MesLi**·(**OEt**<sub>2</sub>)<sub>0.12</sub> as a white powder in 93% yield (5.05 g, 37.4 mmol).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400.1 MHz, THF-*d*<sub>8</sub>, 293 K): δ 6.46 (s, 2H; *m*-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>2</sub>), 2.35 (s, 6H; *o*-CH<sub>3</sub>), 2.07 (s, 3H; *p*-CH<sub>3</sub>).

## Preparation of $[IPrCu(\eta^2 - P_4)][Al(OC(CF_3)_3)_4]$ (1a):

A solution of IPrCuCl (0.200 g, 0.410 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) in DCM (15 mL) was added dropwise to a suspension of  $Li[Al(OC(CF_3)_3)_4]$  (0.399 g, 0.410 mmol, 1 equiv.) and P<sub>4</sub> (0.056 g, 0.451 mmol, 1.1 equiv.) in DCM (20 mL) at 0 °C. The turbid solution was stirred for 1 hour at 0 °C, and then allowed to warm to room temperature after which it was filtered through a cannula. Removal of the solvent *in vacuo* and subsequent washing of the residue with *n*-pentane (3 x 10 mL) gave **1a** as a white solid in 92% (0.580 g, 0.376 mmol).

Mp. (nitrogen, sealed capillary): 100-228 °C (decomposition).

<sup>1</sup>**H NMR (400.1 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 293 K):**  $\delta$  7.61 (t, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 7.6 Hz, 2H; *p*-C<sub>6</sub>*H*<sub>3</sub>), 7.39 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 8.0 Hz, 4H; *m*-C<sub>6</sub>*H*<sub>3</sub>), 7.30 (s, 2H; C(NCH)<sub>2</sub>), 2.46 (sept, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 6.8 Hz, 4H; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 1.26 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 6.8 Hz, 12H; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 1.21 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 6.8 Hz, 12H; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>).

<sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} **NMR** (100.6 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 293 K):  $\delta$  176.1 (only observed in the HMBC spectrum, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>C,H</sub> coupling with C(NC*H*)<sub>2</sub>; *C*(NCH)<sub>2</sub>), 146.1 (s; *o*-*C*<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>), 134.0 (s; *ipso*-*C*<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>), 131.8 (s; *p*-*C*<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>), 125.1 (s; *m*-*C*<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>), 124.8 (s; C(NCH)<sub>2</sub>), 121.7 (q, <sup>1</sup>*J*<sub>C,F</sub> = 293.5 Hz; C(*C*F<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>), 29.2 (s; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 25.2 (s; CH(*C*H<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 24.2 (s; CH(*C*H<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), not observed (*C*(CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>).

<sup>19</sup>F NMR (235.4 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 293 K): δ –75.4 (s).

<sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (162.0 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 293 K):  $\delta$  –483.1 (s).

**HR-MS (ESI)**: 389.2920  $[M + H - CuP_4]^+$ . Calcd.: for C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>37</sub>N<sub>2</sub> 389.2956.

## Preparation of [IPrAu( $\eta^2$ -P<sub>4</sub>)][Al(OC(CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>)<sub>4</sub>] (1b):

A solution of IPrAuCl (0.204 g, 0.328 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) in DCM (15 mL) was added dropwise to a suspension of  $Li[Al(OC(CF_3)_3)_4]$  (0.319 g, 0.328 mmol, 1 equiv.) and P<sub>4</sub> (0.045 g, 0.361 mmol, 1.1 equiv.) in DCM (15 mL) at 0 °C. The turbid solution was stirred for 1 hour at 0 °C, and then allowed to warm to room temperature after which it was filtered through a cannula. Removal of the solvent *in vacuo* and subsequent washing of the residue with *n*-pentane (3 x 10 mL) gave **1b** as a white solid in 87% (0.478 g, 0.285 mmol). X-ray quality crystals were grown by cooling a saturated solution of **1b** in a DCM/*n*-pentane solvent mixture to -20 °C.

Mp. (nitrogen, sealed capillary): 160–175 °C (trajectory).

<sup>1</sup>**H NMR (400.1 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 293 K):**  $\delta$  7.62 (t, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 8.0 Hz, 2H; *p*-C<sub>6</sub>*H*<sub>3</sub>), 7.38 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 8.0 Hz, 4H; *m*-C<sub>6</sub>*H*<sub>3</sub>), 7.36 (s, 2H; C(NCH)<sub>2</sub>), 2.46 (sept, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 8.0 Hz, 4H; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 1.28 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 8.0 Hz, 12H; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 1.27 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 8.0 Hz, 12H; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>).

<sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100.6 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 291 K):  $\delta$  191.1 (only observed in the HMBC spectrum, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>C,H</sub> coupling with C(NCH)<sub>2</sub>; C(NCH)<sub>2</sub>), 146.1 (s; *o*-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>), 133.0 (s; *ipso*-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>), 132.1 (s; *p*-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>), 125.1 (s; *m*-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>), 125.0 (s; C(NCH)<sub>2</sub>), 121.6 (q, <sup>1</sup>J<sub>C,F</sub> = 291.3 Hz; C(CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>), 29.3 (s; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 25.0 (s; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 24.3 (s; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), not observed (*C*(CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>).

<sup>19</sup>F NMR (235.4 MHz,  $CD_2Cl_2$ , 293 K):  $\delta$  -75.8 (s).

<sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (162.0 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 293 K): δ -464.4 (br. s).

**HR–MS (ESI)**: 709.1489 [M]<sup>+</sup>. Calcd.: for C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>36</sub>AuN<sub>2</sub>P<sub>4</sub> 709.1494.

### Preparation of [DmpP<sub>4</sub>·(IPrAu)<sub>2</sub>][Al(OC(CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>)<sub>4</sub>] (3):

A solution of DmpLi (0.024 g, 0.075 mmol, 1 equiv.) in toluene (2.5 mL) was slowly added to a solution of **1b** (0.251 g, 0.150 mmol, 2 equiv.) in toluene (10 mL) at -78 °C. The resulting yellow suspension was allowed to warm to room temperature and stirred for 30 min. after which the solvent was removed *in vacuo* to give a yellow solid. The product was extracted into DCM (10 mL), evaporated to dryness and subsequently washed with *n*-pentane (2 x 10 mL) to give a pale yellow powder. Cooling a saturated solution of the crude product in a mixture of DCM/*n*-pentane to -80 °C resulted in the precipitation of a yellow oil, which was removed by filtration over neutral Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. The filtrate was evaporated to dryness to give **3** as a white powder in 67% (0.129 g, 0.050 mmol). X-ray quality crystals were grown at 0 °C from a saturated solution of **3** in DCM layered with *n*-pentane.

**Mp.** (nitrogen, sealed capillary): 219–256 °C (decomposition).

<sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (400.1 **MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 297 K):**  $\delta$  7.54 (t, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 7.9 Hz, 2H; *p*-dipp*H*), 7.51 (t, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 7.9 Hz, 2H; *p*-dipp*H*), 7.28 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 7.9 Hz, 4H; *m*-dipp*H*), 7.25 (buried, 1H; *p*-C<sub>6</sub>*H*<sub>3</sub>), 7.23 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 7.9 Hz, 4H; *m*-dipp*H*), 7.16 (s, 2H; C(NC*H*)<sub>2</sub>), 7.11 (s, 2H; C(NC*H*)<sub>2</sub>), 6.89 (s, 4H; *m*-mes*H*), 6.85 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 7.5 Hz, 2H; *m*-C<sub>6</sub>*H*<sub>3</sub>), 2.38 (s, 6H; *p*-C*H*<sub>3</sub>), 2.33 (sept, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 6.8 Hz, 4H; C*H*(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 2.32 (sept, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 6.8 Hz, 4H; C*H*(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 1.88 (s, 12H; *o*-C*H*<sub>3</sub>), 1.18 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 7.0 Hz, 12H; CH(C*H*<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 1.15 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 7.0 Hz, 12H; CH(C*H*<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 1.14 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 7.0 Hz, 12H; CH(C*H*<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>).

<sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100.6 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 297 K):  $\delta$  191.9 (only observed in the HMBC spectrum, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>C,H</sub> coupling with C(NC*H*)<sub>2</sub>; *C*(NCH)<sub>2</sub>), 190.5 (only observed in the HMBC spectrum, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>C,H</sub> coupling with C(NC*H*)<sub>2</sub>; *C*(NCH)<sub>2</sub>), 145.9 (s; *o*-dipp*C*), 145.4 (d, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>C,P</sub> = 9.0 Hz; *o*-*C*<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>), 139.0 (s; *ipso*-mes*C*), 137.6 (s; *p*-mes*C*), 136.4 (s; *o*-mes*C*), 133.8 (s; *ipso*-dipp*C*), 133.7 (s; *ipso*-dipp*C*), 131.3 (s; *p*-dipp*C*), 131.2 (s; *p*-dipp*C*), 129.7 (s; *p*-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>), 129.3 (s; *m*-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>), 129.1 (s; *m*-mes*C*), 124.6 (s; *m*-dipp*C*), 124.5 (s; *m*-dipp*C*), 124.3 (s; C(NCH)<sub>2</sub>), 124.2 (s; C(NCH)<sub>2</sub>), 121.7 (q, <sup>1</sup>*J*<sub>C,F</sub> = 293.1 Hz; C(CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>), 29.1 (s; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 29.0 (s; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 25.0 (s; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 24.9 (s; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 24.1 (s; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 23.9 (s; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 21.6 (s; *o*-CH<sub>3</sub>), 21.4 (s; *p*-CH<sub>3</sub>), not observed (*C*(CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>), not observed (*ipso*-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>).

<sup>19</sup>F NMR (235.4 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 292 K): δ –78.9 (s).

<sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (162.0 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 297 K):  $\delta$  -105.5 (td, <sup>1</sup>J<sub>P,P</sub> = -185.9 Hz, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>P,P</sub> = 117.7 Hz, 1P; *P*-Dmp), -118.7 (td, <sup>1</sup>J<sub>P,P</sub> = -201.1 Hz, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>P,P</sub> = 117.7 Hz, 1P; *P*-(AuIPr)<sub>2</sub>), -327.9 (dd, <sup>1</sup>J<sub>P,P</sub> = -202.0 Hz, <sup>1</sup>J<sub>P,P</sub> = -186.8 Hz, 2P; *P*-bridgehead).

**HR–MS (ESI)**: 1023.3488  $[M + H - IPrAu]^+$ . Calcd.: for C<sub>51</sub>H<sub>62</sub>AuN<sub>2</sub>P<sub>4</sub> 1023.3523.

#### Preparation of [MesP<sub>4</sub>·(IPrAu)<sub>2</sub>][Al(OC(CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>)<sub>4</sub>] (4):

Cold toluene (10 mL, -78 °C) was added to a pre-cooled Schlenk flask (-78 °C) containing a mixture of MesLi (0.014 g, 0.104 mmol, 1 equiv.) and **1b** (0.350 g, 0.209 mmol, 2 equiv.). The resulting yellow suspension was allowed to warm to room temperature and stirred for 60 min. after which the solvent was removed *in vacuo* to give a yellow solid. The product was extracted into DCM (10 mL), evaporated to dryness and subsequently washed with *n*-pentane (2 x 10 mL) to give a pale yellow powder. Cooling a saturated solution of the crude product in a mixture of DCM/*n*-pentane to -80 °C resulted in the precipitation of a yellow oil, which was removed by filtration over neutral Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. The filtrate was evaporated to dryness to give **4** as a pale yellow powder in 62% (0.154 g, 0.065 mmol).

Mp. (nitrogen, sealed capillary): 166–226 °C (decomposition).

<sup>1</sup>**H NMR** (400.1 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 293 K):  $\delta$  7.56 (t, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 7.8 Hz, 2H; *p*-dipp*H*), 7.32 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 7.8 Hz, 4H; *m*-dipp*H*), 7.23-7.19 (multiple signals, 10H; *m*-dipp*H*, *p*-dipp*H*, C(NC*H*)<sub>2</sub>), 6.73 (s, 2H; *m*-mes*H*), 2.43 (sept, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 6.9 Hz, 4H; C*H*(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 2.39 (s, 6H; *o*-C*H*<sub>3</sub>), 2.36 (sept, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 6.9 Hz, 4H; C*H*(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 2.23 (s, 3H; *p*-C*H*<sub>3</sub>), 1.23 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 6.9 Hz, 12H; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 1.21 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 6.9 Hz, 12H; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 1.20 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 6.9 Hz, 12H; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>), 1.14 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>H,H</sub> = 6.9 Hz, 12H; CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>).

<sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100.6 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 294 K):  $\delta$  192.3 (s; *C*(NCH)<sub>2</sub>), 191.1 (*C*(NCH)<sub>2</sub>), 146.1 (s; *o*-dipp*C*), 146.0 (s; *o*-dipp*C*), 140.4 (d, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>C,P</sub> = 9.1 Hz; *o*-mes*C*), 139.3 (s; *p*-mes*C*), 133.9 (s; *ipso*-dipp*C*), 133.6 (s; *ipso*-dipp*C*), 131.3 (s; *p*-dipp*C*), 131.2 (s; *p*-dipp*C*), 129.2 (s; *m*-mes*C*), 124.6 (s; *m*-dipp*C*), 124.4 (s; *m*-dipp*C*), 124.3 (d, <sup>4</sup>*J*<sub>C,P</sub> = 2.6

Hz;  $C(NCH)_2$ ), 124.2 (d,  ${}^{4}J_{C,P} = 2.1$  Hz;  $C(NCH)_2$ ), 121.7 (q,  ${}^{1}J_{C,F} = 293.5$  Hz;  $C(CF_3)_3$ ), 29.1 (s;  $CH(CH_3)_2$ ), 25.1 (s;  $CH(CH_3)_2$ ), 24.9 (s;  $CH(CH_3)_2$ ), 24.1 (s; *o*-*C*H<sub>3</sub>), 24.0 (s;  $CH(CH_3)_2$ ), 21.0 (s; *p*-*C*H<sub>3</sub>), not observed (*C*(CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>), not observed (*ipso*-mes*C*).

<sup>19</sup>F NMR (235.4 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 293 K): δ –76.2 (s).

<sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (162.0 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 294 K):  $\delta$  -110.6 (td, <sup>1</sup>J<sub>P,P</sub> = -181.9 Hz, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>P,P</sub> = 133.1 Hz, 1P; *P*-Mes), -119.9 (td, <sup>1</sup>J<sub>P,P</sub> = -193.4 Hz, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>P,P</sub> = 132.4 Hz, 1P; *P*-(AuIPr)<sub>2</sub>), -314.5 (dd, <sup>1</sup>J<sub>P,P</sub> = -180.6 Hz, <sup>1</sup>J<sub>P,P</sub> = -193.1 Hz, 2P; *P*-bridgehead).

HR-MS (ESI): 829.2432 (M + H – IPrAu]<sup>+</sup>. Calcd.: for C<sub>36</sub>H<sub>48</sub>AuN<sub>2</sub>P<sub>4</sub> 829.2428.

#### **Reaction of MesLi with P4 and BPh3:**

To a solution of P<sub>4</sub> (0.098 g, 0.791 mmol, 1 equiv.) and BPh<sub>3</sub> (0.192 g, 0.791 mmol, 1 equiv.) in toluene at 0 °C was added a suspension of MesLi (0.100 g, 0.791 mmol, 1 equiv.) in toluene (15 mL). The resulting suspension was stirred for 1 h at room temperature and analyzed using <sup>11</sup>B and <sup>31</sup>P NMR spectroscopy. The <sup>31</sup>P NMR spectrum only showed a sharp signal originating from P<sub>4</sub> at –519.8 ppm, and in the <sup>11</sup>B NMR spectrum one new product was observed resonating at –6.9 ppm, corresponding to Li<sup>+</sup>MesBPh<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>. Formation of the latter was confirmed in a control experiment, in which MesLi (0.010 g, 0.079 mmol, 1 equiv.) was reacted with BPh<sub>3</sub> (0.019 g, 0.079 mmol, 1 equiv.) in THF-*d*<sub>8</sub> (0.6 mL) to give a clear colorless solution which was analyzed using <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>11</sup>B NMR spectroscopy. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400.1 MHz, THF-*d*<sub>8</sub>, 293 K):  $\delta$  7.38 (br. s, 6H; *o*-B(C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>)<sub>3</sub>), 6.79 (t, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> = 7.3 Hz, 6H; *m*-B(C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>)<sub>3</sub>),

 $6.65 \text{ (t, }^{3}J_{\text{H,H}} = 7.3 \text{ Hz}, 3\text{H}; p-\text{B}(\text{C}_{6}H_{5})_{3}\text{)}, 6.39 \text{ (s, 2H}; m-\text{C}_{6}H_{2}\text{)}, 2.11 \text{ (s, 3H}; p-\text{C}H_{3}\text{)}, 1.58 \text{ (s, 6H}; o-\text{C}H_{3}\text{)}.$ 

<sup>11</sup>**B NMR (128.4 MHz, THF-***d*<sub>8</sub>, 293 K): δ –8.69 (s; Mes*B*Ph<sub>3</sub>).

### **VT NMR Spectroscopy:**

 $[IPrM(\eta^2-P_4)][Al(OC(CF_3)_3)_4]$  (M = Cu, Au; 0.06 mmol) was dissolved in CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (0.6 mL) and loaded into an NMR tube. The samples were used to record the <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra using a Bruker Avance 400 in the temperature range of -90 °C to 0 °C (Figure S1).



**Figure S1.** VT <sup>31</sup>P{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (162.0 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>) spectra recorded of [IPrAu( $\eta^2$ -P<sub>4</sub>)][Al(OC(CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>)<sub>4</sub>] **1b** (left) and [IPrCu( $\eta^2$ -P<sub>4</sub>)][Al(OC(CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>)<sub>4</sub>] **1a** (right).

Calculation of the estimated free enthalpy of activation  $\Delta G^{\ddagger}$  for **1b** at the coalescence temperature ( $T_{\rm C} = -40$  °C) was performed using the Eyring equation (1), with the corresponding rate constant  $k_{\rm C}$  defined by equation (2).<sup>[4]</sup>

$$\Delta G_{\rm C}^{\ddagger} = 4.58 \ T_{\rm C} \left( 10.32 + \log \left( T_{\rm C} / k_{\rm C} \right) \right) \text{ cal mol}^{-1} \tag{1}$$

$$k_{\rm C} = (\pi \,\Delta \nu \,/\,\sqrt{2}) = 2.22 \,\Delta \nu \tag{2}$$

 $(\Delta v \text{ is the separation in Hz between the two signals at the low-temperature limit})$ 

$$k_{233K} = 2.22 \cdot 1424.72 \text{ Hz} = 3162.88 \text{ s}^{-1}$$
  
$$\Delta G_{233K}^{\ddagger} = 4.58 \cdot 233 \text{ K} \cdot (10.32 + \log (233 \text{ K} / 3162.88 \text{ s}^{-1})) = 9804.11 \text{ cal mol}^{-1} = 9.8 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}$$

## 2. Computational Details

Density functional calculations were performed at the  $\omega$ B97X-D<sup>[5]</sup> level of theory using Gaussian09, revision D.01.<sup>[6]</sup> Geometry optimizations of **1a**<sup>+</sup> and **1b**<sup>+</sup> were performed using the 6-31+G(2d,p)<sup>[7]</sup> basis set for atoms C, H, N, P in combination with the LANL2DZ<sup>[8]</sup> basis set for Cu and Au. All other geometry optimizations were performed using the 6-31G(d) basis set for atoms C, H, N, P in combination with the LANL2DZ basis set for Au, and uncorrected energies were obtained from single point calculations (SPE) using 6-311+G(2d,p) for atoms C, H, N, P and the LANL2DZ basis set for Au. The nature of each stationary point was confirmed by frequency calculations. The ETS-NOCV<sup>[9]</sup> and AIM<sup>[10]</sup> analyses were performed at the ZORA-BP86-D3/TZ2P<sup>[11]</sup> level of theory using ADF2013.01.<sup>[12]</sup>

### $[IPrCu(\eta^2 - P_4)]^+ (1a^+)$

E:	-2721.209026	a.u.
----	--------------	------

- ZPE: 0.585241 a.u.
- G: -2720.697589 a.u.
- Cartesian coordinates:

С	-1.052134000	-3.035818000	-0.325289000
С	0.296110000	-3.175033000	-0.389038000
Н	-1.847280000	-3.760788000	-0.387909000
Н	0.918294000	-4.046045000	-0.515958000
Ν	0.825054000	-1.909408000	-0.246602000
Ν	-1.298170000	-1.689599000	-0.155220000
С	-0.149211000	-0.990950000	-0.103356000
С	2.218223000	-1.562808000	-0.229648000
С	2.903891000	-1.649351000	0.989755000
С	2.802573000	-1.099931000	-1.414321000
С	4.241173000	-1.255261000	0.995282000
С	4.142872000	-0.714713000	-1.352801000
С	4.854061000	-0.792609000	-0.163222000
Н	4.811840000	-1.304803000	1.916256000
Н	4.636850000	-0.349075000	-2.247295000
Н	5.896681000	-0.492915000	-0.137464000
С	-2.589795000	-1.075551000	-0.032789000
С	-3.282941000	-0.753358000	-1.207690000
С	-3.069990000	-0.791429000	1.250734000
С	-4.522248000	-0.131958000	-1.063098000
С	-4.315886000	-0.168207000	1.339268000
С	-5.035138000	0.154493000	0.196788000
Н	-5.094952000	0.136242000	-1.944264000
Н	-4.730630000	0.065591000	2.314595000
Н	-6.003748000	0.634852000	0.287900000
Р	-0.685743000	3.154307000	0.044534000

Р	0.455807000	4.391077000	1.446085000
Р	1.564888000	2.733232000	0.540627000
Р	0.937859000	4.407264000	-0.726688000
Cu	0.084857000	0.919555000	0.122058000
С	2.027084000	-0.978449000	-2.716450000
С	2.712426000	-1.732292000	-3.863093000
С	1.810860000	0.497533000	-3.079521000
Н	1.039631000	-1.429376000	-2.576091000
Н	2.876256000	-2.783046000	-3.606406000
Н	2.092363000	-1.693650000	-4.764154000
Н	3.682980000	-1.291799000	-4.112750000
Н	1.276403000	1.028433000	-2.281506000
Н	2.766155000	1.009094000	-3.237812000
Н	1.221541000	0.587732000	-3.997169000
С	2.210009000	-2.084456000	2.271170000
С	1.762075000	-0.852127000	3.072002000
С	3.072699000	-3.013006000	3.132441000
Н	1.308243000	-2.643637000	2.002129000
Н	1.088553000	-0.219357000	2.483134000
Н	1.232149000	-1.155082000	3.980861000
Н	2.625249000	-0.245657000	3.367845000
Н	3.437340000	-3.868633000	2.556477000
Н	3.939522000	-2.494202000	3.554039000
Н	2.484660000	-3.393450000	3.973051000
С	-2.280372000	-1.108630000	2.510572000
С	-3.068315000	-2.019019000	3.460877000
С	-1.844459000	0.184396000	3.213754000
Н	-1.370013000	-1.646310000	2.227050000
Н	-3.376947000	-2.941295000	2.959697000
Н	-2.451985000	-2.289205000	4.324177000
Н	-3.968943000	-1.525608000	3.840038000
Н	-1.240784000	0.814831000	2.548036000
Н	-2.709173000	0.774866000	3.534169000
Н	-1.243281000	-0.042362000	4.099697000
С	-2.682709000	-0.998153000	-2.583321000
С	-2.000110000	0.281143000	-3.091577000
С	-3.704923000	-1.517262000	-3.599965000
Н	-1.908259000	-1.766003000	-2.489067000
Н	-1.222407000	0.618195000	-2.397022000
Н	-1.531719000	0.108128000	-4.065892000
Н	-2.729530000	1.090910000	-3.202748000
Н	-4.230004000	-2.399747000	-3.222803000
Н	-4.452990000	-0.759340000	-3.853192000
Н	-3.198219000	-1.792902000	-4.529708000

## $[IPrAu(\eta^2 - P_4)]^+(1b^+)$

E: -2660.51528746 a.u.

### ZPE: 0.584799 a.u.

## G: -2660.005308 a.u.

### Cartesian coordinates:

С	-0.731644000	-3.301440000	-0.085633000
С	0.625020000	-3.322214000	-0.119903000
Н	-1.460351000	-4.095323000	-0.093696000
Н	1.328158000	-4.138008000	-0.158758000
Ν	1.038290000	-2.008218000	-0.087848000
Ν	-1.102891000	-1.975519000	-0.037111000
С	-0.019532000	-1.180236000	-0.038315000
С	2.397311000	-1.543343000	-0.078736000
С	3.034225000	-1.403716000	1.160499000
С	2.985992000	-1.195729000	-1.300054000
С	4.327698000	-0.883022000	1.150764000
С	4.281928000	-0.681714000	-1.252279000
С	4.943845000	-0.524422000	-0.041576000
Н	4.858913000	-0.751529000	2.087788000
Н	4.780012000	-0.398201000	-2.173962000
Н	5.950318000	-0.119182000	-0.026853000
С	-2.447564000	-1.473041000	0.005187000
С	-3.099250000	-1.234866000	-1.210713000
С	-3.010397000	-1.198211000	1.257049000
С	-4.382732000	-0.693653000	-1.143664000
С	-4.297447000	-0.660720000	1.266447000
С	-4.975271000	-0.410321000	0.080341000
Н	-4.925675000	-0.487966000	-2.060578000
Н	-4.776201000	-0.433614000	2.213594000
Н	-5.974940000	0.010524000	0.110462000
Р	-0.475305000	3.107507000	-0.998443000
Р	-0.916868000	4.542349000	0.598958000
Р	0.586501000	3.036363000	1.136863000
Р	1.078553000	4.531646000	-0.390441000
Au	0.014850000	0.855858000	0.013975000
С	2.264730000	-1.347091000	-2.629417000
С	3.028328000	-2.284977000	-3.573679000
С	2.015286000	0.018940000	-3.282577000
Н	1.286039000	-1.800834000	-2.444229000
Н	3.192870000	-3.263659000	-3.112636000
Н	2.464952000	-2.432980000	-4.500123000
Н	4.006054000	-1.872976000	-3.843511000
Н	1.427497000	0.670223000	-2.625951000
Н	2.956710000	0.530597000	-3.507992000
Н	1.466136000	-0.102040000	-4.221528000
С	2.354170000	-1.764039000	2.471785000

С	1.997869000	-0.500642000	3.267632000
С	3.204923000	-2.726063000	3.310300000
Н	1.415144000	-2.279024000	2.246136000
Н	1.334395000	0.154254000	2.693397000
Н	1.489107000	-0.766296000	4.199706000
Н	2.897178000	0.069475000	3.524495000
Н	3.470979000	-3.622387000	2.741703000
Н	4.133323000	-2.255433000	3.649192000
Н	2.651932000	-3.038164000	4.201569000
С	-2.268941000	-1.443874000	2.561166000
С	-3.037496000	-2.412310000	3.469575000
С	-1.971973000	-0.121965000	3.282158000
Н	-1.306056000	-1.911274000	2.332128000
Н	-3.240825000	-3.358977000	2.959822000
Н	-2.456419000	-2.627871000	4.371651000
Н	-3.996030000	-1.989885000	3.787781000
Н	-1.382062000	0.550356000	2.649075000
Н	-2.896119000	0.398196000	3.554627000
Н	-1.406874000	-0.306606000	4.201107000
С	-2.445368000	-1.513696000	-2.554474000
С	-2.120015000	-0.204172000	-3.285924000
С	-3.307276000	-2.437205000	-3.424339000
Н	-1.496289000	-2.029336000	-2.377532000
Н	-1.457459000	0.428869000	-2.686550000
Н	-1.622460000	-0.411227000	-4.238602000
Н	-3.030825000	0.365680000	-3.498400000
Н	-3.538413000	-3.372184000	-2.904938000
Н	-4.254860000	-1.963244000	-3.699700000
Н	-2.780554000	-2.682171000	-4.351732000

## $[NHC^{Ph}Au(\eta^2 - P_4)]^+$

- E: -2188.72572027 a.u.
- ZPE: 0.245533 a.u.
- G: -2188.535713 a.u.
- SPE: -2189.03893801 a.u.

Cartesian coordinates:

С	-1.604149000	-3.530408000	-0.011158000
С	-0.290021000	-3.858086000	-0.031216000
Н	-2.492741000	-4.141219000	0.002018000
Н	0.206872000	-4.814637000	-0.059449000
Ν	0.415780000	-2.669253000	-0.027427000
Ν	-1.668539000	-2.148902000	0.009484000
С	-0.428464000	-1.616373000	-0.001618000
С	1.846896000	-2.562134000	-0.042373000
С	2.572859000	-3.061352000	1.033296000

С	2.473501000	-1.954204000	-1.126485000
С	3.959461000	-2.943026000	1.021917000
Н	2.058521000	-3.522722000	1.870757000
С	3.859591000	-1.831260000	-1.120899000
Н	1.882428000	-1.598011000	-1.964868000
С	4.600692000	-2.325026000	-0.049408000
Н	4.537137000	-3.327842000	1.855615000
Н	4.360049000	-1.362986000	-1.961992000
Н	5.681780000	-2.232279000	-0.051596000
С	-2.881209000	-1.382073000	0.035465000
С	-3.766289000	-1.480339000	-1.032449000
С	-3.140698000	-0.554502000	1.124338000
С	-4.936374000	-0.727461000	-1.007697000
Η	-3.534431000	-2.126038000	-1.874013000
С	-4.308025000	0.202802000	1.131777000
Η	-2.443988000	-0.519636000	1.956483000
С	-5.204506000	0.115289000	0.068835000
Н	-5.635918000	-0.794859000	-1.834157000
Н	-4.524110000	0.848741000	1.976345000
Н	-6.118024000	0.700707000	0.081836000
Р	0.211635000	2.635229000	-1.106254000
Р	0.085541000	4.202706000	0.418336000
Р	1.121435000	2.398603000	1.107487000
Р	2.050219000	3.629880000	-0.449232000
Au	0.078983000	0.362918000	0.007843000

## [AnNILC<sup>Ph</sup>]+

С

E:	-823.325	658148 a.u.	
ZPH	E: 0.23811	a.u.	
G:	-823.134	84 a.u.	
SPE	E: -823.505	925964 a.u.	
Car	tesian coordin	ates:	
Au	-0.000079000	-1.359270000	-0.000187000
С	0.000029000	0.623413000	-0.000137000
Ν	-1.079577000	1.426375000	-0.008617000
Ν	1.079699000	1.426294000	0.008320000
С	-0.677518000	2.749591000	-0.004493000
С	-2.446957000	0.978804000	-0.022861000
С	0.677726000	2.749539000	0.004204000
С	2.447045000	0.978657000	0.022915000
Н	-1.393708000	3.555597000	-0.016540000
С	-3.222627000	1.154016000	1.117527000
С	-2.954069000	0.385226000	-1.174696000
Н	1.393974000	3.555494000	0.016217000

3.223228000 1.154338000 -1.117048000

С	2.953654000	0.384600000	1.174732000
С	-4.544099000	0.718167000	1.100561000
С	-4.274744000	-0.053230000	-1.175137000
С	4.544695000	0.718482000	-1.099666000
С	4.274319000	-0.053869000	1.175584000
С	-5.066792000	0.114217000	-0.041088000
Н	-5.162456000	0.846440000	1.982464000
Н	-4.687092000	-0.515088000	-2.065832000
С	5.066878000	0.114053000	0.041959000
Η	5.163454000	0.847132000	-1.981233000
Н	4.686272000	-0.516090000	2.066274000
Н	-6.097371000	-0.225037000	-0.048144000
Н	6.097455000	-0.225202000	0.049340000
Н	-2.795347000	1.614409000	2.002923000
Н	-2.328228000	0.282924000	-2.056023000
Н	2.796347000	1.615077000	-2.002457000
Н	2.327429000	0.281973000	2.055750000

## [PhP<sub>4</sub>AuNHC<sup>Ph</sup>]

E: -2420.49290947 a.u.

ZPE: 0.33725 a.u.

G: -2420.218916 a.u.

SPE: -2420.8662849 a.u.

#### Cartesian coordinates:

Р	2.448554000	0.170284000	-0.882943000
Р	2.126664000	-1.556167000	0.406329000
Р	0.950714000	-1.379887000	-1.488890000
Р	3.869889000	-1.550108000	-0.987055000
С	5.223683000	-0.956658000	0.129824000
С	6.096757000	0.044181000	-0.315264000
С	5.462486000	-1.545089000	1.377550000
С	7.168929000	0.455568000	0.470917000
С	6.536041000	-1.135068000	2.163810000
С	7.391084000	-0.133082000	1.713623000
Н	7.833381000	1.236511000	0.111874000
Н	6.702914000	-1.600349000	3.131200000
С	-4.487222000	1.337478000	1.285112000
С	-3.721349000	2.448234000	1.215441000
Н	-5.482040000	1.180028000	1.669589000
Н	-3.896609000	3.458370000	1.548880000
Ν	-2.534862000	2.073021000	0.606907000
Ν	-3.750674000	0.312530000	0.711804000
С	-2.540620000	0.754428000	0.288380000
С	-1.457626000	2.974948000	0.325557000
С	-1.721089000	4.119335000	-0.420498000

С	-0.174229000	2.692738000	0.784151000
С	-0.679147000	4.993098000	-0.714225000
С	0.864439000	3.561161000	0.465132000
С	0.613226000	4.711322000	-0.278654000
Н	-0.876465000	5.885345000	-1.299904000
Н	1.870904000	3.328175000	0.796067000
Н	1.426827000	5.385977000	-0.525398000
С	-4.215861000	-1.034981000	0.594733000
С	-4.698936000	-1.682817000	1.727288000
С	-4.185857000	-1.672937000	-0.641485000
С	-5.160495000	-2.990803000	1.617782000
С	-4.633454000	-2.986234000	-0.736073000
С	-5.124106000	-3.644381000	0.388973000
Н	-5.534707000	-3.502294000	2.498786000
Н	-4.601238000	-3.492460000	-1.695191000
Н	-5.475700000	-4.668036000	0.308027000
Н	5.933629000	0.509865000	-1.284321000
Н	4.802380000	-2.327908000	1.741758000
Н	8.228166000	0.186927000	2.327471000
Au	-0.961976000	-0.293514000	-0.565561000
Н	-4.691365000	-1.174615000	2.686842000
Н	-3.810728000	-1.147093000	-1.513071000
Н	-2.725526000	4.306814000	-0.788291000
Н	0.013752000	1.798986000	1.369945000

# $[PhP_4 \cdot (AuNHC^{Ph})_2]^+$

E:	-3243.95399755 a.u.
ZPE:	0.577794 a.u.

SPE: -3244.50716908 a.u.

Cartesian coordinates:

Р	-1.009625000	-2.807592000	-0.764312000
Р	-1.090535000	-2.469094000	1.409008000
Р	-0.108108000	-0.985148000	0.100241000
Р	-2.860500000	-1.948284000	0.145309000
С	-3.950805000	-3.415413000	0.356250000
С	-4.338147000	-4.190531000	-0.742589000
С	-4.541866000	-3.657764000	1.602525000
С	-5.287546000	-5.197947000	-0.593522000
С	-5.491222000	-4.664339000	1.749043000
С	-5.866179000	-5.434996000	0.650584000
Н	-5.575406000	-5.798384000	-1.451153000
Н	-5.937835000	-4.848204000	2.721458000
С	6.095288000	0.752304000	0.766815000
С	6.474575000	-0.384065000	0.137939000

Н	6.668196000	1.584420000	1.143509000
Н	7.448898000	-0.761497000	-0.128173000
Ν	5.317063000	-1.096757000	-0.128497000
Ν	4.715334000	0.709000000	0.863026000
С	4.229113000	-0.430693000	0.315882000
С	5.280133000	-2.372759000	-0.779618000
С	5.861673000	-2.508762000	-2.035706000
С	4.667230000	-3.448466000	-0.144097000
С	5.824074000	-3.747778000	-2.667677000
С	4.622454000	-4.678374000	-0.791936000
С	5.201164000	-4.829516000	-2.049894000
Н	6.274293000	-3.863896000	-3.647989000
Н	4.143671000	-5.522181000	-0.306246000
Н	5.168348000	-5.792580000	-2.548650000
С	3.899879000	1.696669000	1.508003000
С	4.129631000	1.985273000	2.848905000
С	2.867962000	2.311030000	0.803414000
С	3.302150000	2.897171000	3.496911000
С	2.028641000	3.198674000	1.467983000
С	2.246265000	3.493485000	2.811655000
Н	3.471858000	3.123462000	4.544409000
Н	1.207455000	3.659120000	0.929282000
Н	1.591396000	4.188686000	3.327106000
Н	-3.896947000	-4.010876000	-1.719722000
Н	-4.259303000	-3.057433000	2.464121000
Н	-6.607993000	-6.219362000	0.764441000
Au	2.229211000	-0.890781000	0.199962000
Au	-1.365814000	0.996264000	-0.239537000
С	-2.503097000	2.670247000	-0.589541000
Ν	-3.855281000	2.677627000	-0.567086000
Ν	-2.155850000	3.938398000	-0.914794000
С	-4.352929000	3.931638000	-0.872265000
С	-4.664386000	1.530264000	-0.255756000
С	-3.282535000	4.728322000	-1.090365000
С	-0.816783000	4.423079000	-1.054904000
Н	-5.411861000	4.130958000	-0.908334000
С	-4.883726000	1.195797000	1.075510000
С	-5.193371000	0.770889000	-1.293023000
Н	-3.211903000	5.766248000	-1.373526000
С	0.081265000	3.762230000	-1.889101000
С	-0.444647000	5.575316000	-0.367422000
С	-5.650411000	0.072778000	1.371618000
С	-5.959933000	-0.349431000	-0.985885000
С	1.373368000	4.261906000	-2.023458000
С	0.844974000	6.075235000	-0.522648000
С	-6.189006000	-0.697543000	0.343392000
Н	-5.824499000	-0.200487000	2.407230000

Н	-6.369893000	-0.957223000	-1.785688000
С	1.755569000	5.417561000	-1.345861000
Н	2.075798000	3.753715000	-2.676371000
Н	1.139189000	6.973980000	0.009187000
Н	-6.771062000	-1.582956000	0.577986000
Н	2.761160000	5.808125000	-1.461925000
Н	4.929882000	1.481946000	3.382982000
Н	2.715685000	2.092175000	-0.248397000
Н	6.321823000	-1.651233000	-2.517363000
Н	4.238127000	-3.322034000	0.844753000
Н	-4.447049000	1.802446000	1.862472000
Н	-4.991673000	1.047297000	-2.323118000
Н	-0.234389000	2.879275000	-2.434952000
Н	-1.154563000	6.068261000	0.289909000

 $\mathbf{P}_4$ 

E:	-1365.3	4816032 a.u.	
ZPE	: 0.00614	2 a.u.	
G:	-1365.3	70773 a.u.	
SPE	-1365.4	6680502 a.u.	
Carte	esian coordi	nates:	
Р	0.449185000	-0.634581000	1.100106000
Р	0.449185000	1.270421000	0.000000000
Р	0.449185000	-0.634581000	-1.100106000

P -1.347556000 -0.001259000 0.00000000

**AIM analyses:** Figure S2 shows the computed (ZORA-BP86-D3/TZ2P) bond paths and critical points (NHC ligands omitted) for  $1a^+$  and  $1b^+$ .



**Figure S2.** Computed AIM bond paths (NHC ligands omitted); bond critical points (BCP) in red, ring critical points (RCP) in green and cage critical points (CCP) in blue.

<b>ETS-NOCV</b> analyses:	Table S1 summariz	es the results obtaine	d from the ETS-1	NOCV analyses of	f the $P_4$ - $M^+$ bonds
in <b>1a</b> <sup>+</sup> and <b>1b</b> <sup>+</sup> .					

	1a <sup>+</sup>	<b>1b</b> <sup>+</sup>
	$([IPrCu(\eta^2-P_4)]^+)$	$([IPrAu(\eta^2-P_4)]^+)$
$\Delta E_{\text{total}}$	-54.8	-56.0
$\Delta E_{\text{Pauli}}$	84.8	130.2
$\Delta E_{\rm elstat}$	-69.8	-102.8
$\Delta E_{ m orb}$	-59.6	-75.0
σ	-25.9	-36.7
$\pi^{  }$	-15.1	-16.1
$\pi^{\perp}$	-5.6	-5.3

**Table S1** ETS-NOCV results using ZORA-BP86-D3/TZ2P (kcal  $mol^{-1}$ )

## 3. X-ray Structure Determinations

#### X-ray crystal structure determination of 1b

 $[C_{27}H_{36}AuN_2P_4][C_{16}AlF_{36}O_4] \cdot 0.5CH_2Cl_2$ , Fw = 1719.03, colourless plate,  $0.64 \times 0.26 \times 0.09 \text{ mm}^3$ , monoclinic,  $P2_1/n$  (no. 14), a = 10.7137(3), b = 38.3822(15), c = 14.7478(4) Å,  $\beta = 90.909(1)$ °, V = 6063.8(3) Å<sup>3</sup>, Z = 4,  $D_x = 4$ 1.883 g/cm<sup>3</sup>,  $\mu = 2.74$  mm<sup>-1</sup>. The crystal appeared to be cracked into two fragments. Consequently, two orientation matrices were used for the integration with the Eval15 software<sup>[13]</sup> 134937 Reflections were measured on a Bruker Kappa ApexII diffractometer with sealed tube and Triumph monochromator ( $\lambda = 0.71073$  Å) at a temperature of 150(2) K up to a resolution of  $(\sin \theta/\lambda)_{max} = 0.65 \text{ Å}^{-1}$ . Multiscan absorption correction and scaling was performed with TWINABS<sup>[14]</sup> (correction range 0.26-0.43). 14091 Reflections were unique ( $R_{int} = 0.042$ ), of which 12651 were observed [I> $2\sigma$ (I)]. The structure was solved with Patterson overlay methods using SHELXT.<sup>[15]</sup> Least-squares refinement was performed with SHELXL-2014<sup>[16]</sup> against F<sup>2</sup> of all reflections using a HKLF-5 reflection file<sup>[17]</sup>. Non-hydrogen atoms were refined freely with anisotropic displacement parameters. All hydrogen atoms were located in difference Fourier maps and subsequently refined with a riding model. The aluminate anion was refined with a disorder model. The CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> solvent molecule was disordered on an inversion center. 1049 Parameters were refined with 4893 restraints (distances, angles and displacement parameters of the disordered groups). R1/wR2 [I >  $2\sigma(I)$ ]: 0.0485 / 0.1210. R1/wR2 [all refl.]: 0.0540 / 0.1230. S = 1.184. Batch scale factors of the second crystal fragment BASF = 0.0532(10). Residual electron density between -1.18 and 1.93 e/Å<sup>3</sup>. Geometry calculations and program.<sup>[18]</sup> checking for higher symmetry were performed with the PLATON

#### X-ray crystal structure determination of 3

 $[C_{78}H_{97}Au_2N_4P_4][C_{16}AlF_{36}O_4]$  + disordered solvent, Fw = 2575.54<sup>[\*]</sup>, colourless block, 0.33 × 0.27 × 0.21 mm<sup>3</sup>, monoclinic, C2/c (no. 15), a = 39.9091(8), b = 25.1072(6), c = 22.5843(8) Å,  $\beta$  = 100.380(1) °, V = 22259.3(8) Å<sup>3</sup>, Z = 8, D<sub>x</sub> = 1.537 g/cm<sup>3</sup> <sup>[\*]</sup>,  $\mu$  = 2.81 mm<sup>-1[\*]</sup>. 195550 Reflections were measured on a Bruker Kappa ApexII diffractometer with sealed tube and Triumph monochromator ( $\lambda$  = 0.71073 Å) at a temperature of 150(2) K up to a resolution of (sin  $\theta/\lambda$ )<sub>max</sub> = 0.65 Å<sup>-1</sup>. The Eval15 software<sup>[13]</sup> was used for the integration of the intensities. Multiscan absorption correction and scaling was performed with SADABS<sup>[14]</sup> (correction range 0.36-0.43). 25563 Reflections were unique (R<sub>int</sub> = 0.023), of which 22676 were observed [I>2 $\sigma$ (I)]. The structure was solved with Patterson overlay methods using SHELXT.<sup>[15]</sup> Least-squares refinement was performed with SHELXL-2014<sup>[16]</sup> against F<sup>2</sup> of all reflections. The crystal structure contains large voids (1944 Å<sup>3</sup> / unit cell), filled with severely disordered solvent molecules. Their contribution to the structure factors was secured by back-Fourier transformation using the Squeeze routine<sup>[19]</sup> resulting in 351 electrons / unit cell. Non-hydrogen atoms were refined freely with anisotropic displacement parameters. All hydrogen atoms were introduced in calculated positions and refined with a riding model. The aluminate anion was refined with a disorder model. 1622 Parameters were refined with 5625 restraints (distances, angles and displacement parameters in the disordered groups). R1/wR2 [I >  $2\sigma$ (I)]: 0.0272 / 0.0690. R1/wR2 [all refl.]: 0.0323 / 0.0719. S = 1.034. Residual electron density between -1.01 and 1.53 e/Å<sup>3</sup>. Geometry calculations and checking for higher symmetry were performed with the PLATON program.<sup>[18]</sup>

[\*] Derived values do not contain the contribution of the disordered solvent molecules.

CCDC 1440355 and 1440356 contain the supplementary crystallographic data for this paper. These data can be obtained free of charge from The Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data\_request/cif.

# 4. NMR Spectra

# $[IPrCu(\eta^2-P_4)][Al(OC(CF_3)_3)_4]$ (1a)



MBR080 / 1H CDC13 / IPr-Cu-P4 Al(OC(CF3)3)4 / after filtration

## MBR048 / 19F CDCl3 / IPr-Cu-P4 aluminate / after filtration F19\_NO\_processing CDCl3 (D:\NMRDATA} JaapBorger 39



# $[IPrAu(\eta^2 - P_4)][Al(OC(CF_3)_3)_4] \ (1b)$



MBR076 / 19F / Au complex in CD2C12 F19\_NO\_processing CD2C12 {D:\NMRDATA} JaapBorger 15

-150

-200

-250

-300

-350

-400

-450

-500

ppm



## $[DmpP_4 \cdot (IPrAu)_2][Al(OC(CF_3)_3)_4] (3)$





JB1348 / 31Pdec CD2Cl2 / after filtration



S24

used used K

## [MesP<sub>4</sub>·(IPrAu)<sub>2</sub>][Al(OC(CF<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>)<sub>4</sub>] (4)







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